

THE NEW

Bluebook

JUNE 1955

25 CENTS

How It Feels To Have A Guaranteed Annual Wage

—page 6

Francis Lewis

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

FROM ROY

XXXXXXXX

Startling New Novel—

The Day The Century Ended

Men You Never Know—

Breadman . . .

The bread and pastries are still warm from the oven as Rodger Smith, route man for the nation's largest home-delivery bakery, loads up for his daily call on 280 hungry customers. "It's strictly a battle against time all day," says Rodger. But a hustler like this family man can thereby make between $6,000 and $7,000 a year. You'll find more on the Smiths if you'll turn to page 64.

Bluebook

JUNE, 1955 Vol. 101, No. 2

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ARTICLES

STORIES

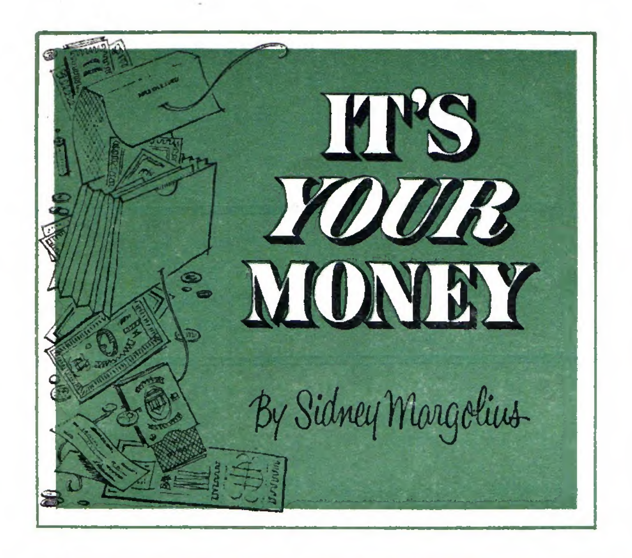
NOVEL

FEATURES

The short stories and novel herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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- **You may draw social security while working**
- **Get the most from Government Bonds**
- **Some railroaders collect 2 pensions**

In this space each month the author will give specific information on your money problems—insurance, investments, borrowing, disability payments, unemployment insurance, money management, Social Security, veterans' benefits, etc. Unfortunately, he cannot manage individual replies, but will answer questions that affect many people. Address him at Bluebook, 230 Park Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

AFTER 18 YEARS of living under a Social Security system designed to protect them when they retire or when the family breadwinner dies, many Americans are seriously misinformed and uninformed about their rights. Older people and disabled workers similarly have little idea of where to find the help that's waiting for them.

This is the inescapable and disturbing fact revealed by over 400 letters we received after publication of the article on Social Security last January. We've had letters from servicemen from Munich to the Far East and up to the rank of colonel asking about their relation to Social Security; letters from as far away as Alaska asking about rehabilitation for disabled workers; questions from doctors and social workers who have to advise others, and appeals for advice from civil service workers.

A number of people are entitled to benefits which they haven't been receiving and we hope we've started them on the way. A number of older men and widows, in some cases with dependent children, who did not realize they were eligible for payments, have now, we hope, visited their local Social Security offices. Others, who had failed to take advantage of their opportunity to get credit for future benefits, now at least have some idea of what to do to gain the precious asset of Social Security protection, and in some cases, of how to increase its value. The need for information on workmen's compensation is similarly acute.

It will not be possible to answer further letters directly—our letter-answering forces have had to run up the white flag in the face of such urgent demand. But this same demand has led us to start this column in which, each month, we will answer those of your questions that pose a general problem or expose a situation affecting a large group of people. Nor will we confine these answers to Social Security, although that will of course be included. What we aim to do is give help on all your problems which center around money.

We won't tell you how to earn more, but we will give you tips on insurance, money management, pensions, investments, borrowing, disability payments, unemployment insurance. In answering your questions we will, of course, get help from Social Security, Railroad Retirement, Veterans' Administration and other agencies, as well as private investment, insurance and economic experts. And we'll level with you; we sell no man's package. So watch this column for information that will apply to you.

Earnings While Getting Benefits

"You say you lose part of your payments on the amount earned over $1200 a year. Does this mean that if I am 65 and still working I can draw some Social Security?"

—R.L., Topeka, Kan.

Answer: It may. It would be wise for people drawing benefits to understand the new rule governing how much they can earn without forfeiting benefits since a few dollars of additional earn-

ings may lose you a whole month's payments. If you earn between $1200.01 and $1280, you lose one month's payments; if between $1280.01 and $1360, two months, and so on. If you earn over $2080 you get no payments at all. But here's a helpful exception to the rule: you will not lose payments for any month in which you earn less than $80 in wages or are not actively engaged in self-employment. Thus, if you had a temporary job, in which you earned, say, $400 a month for four months, but the rest of the year did not earn over $79.99 in each month, you would lose only four months of payments regardless of how much you earned for the year. Note that if a man loses his payment because of extra earnings, his wife does too (unless she is drawing payments from her own account). But in the case of a widow with dependent children, the youngsters would still get their payments even if the mother lost hers.

How to Handle "E" Bonds

"I buy a Government 'E' bond a month. This is my way of protecting my family against any emergencies. If we ever do have to cash in bonds, should we cash in the latest ones or the older ones?"

—J. L., Portland, Ore.

Answer: Always cash in the most recent "E" bonds first, to protect the higher interest rate the older ones are earning. "E" bonds that are held to maturity earn you 3 percent on your investment. But the average during the first five years is only about 1½ per cent; during the second five, about 4½. In fact, for this reason money you want easily available or plan to use soon, ought to be cached in savings banks and associations, which nowadays pay close to 3 percent, since you won't get the advertised 3 percent on the bonds unless you do hold them almost 10 years. But for long-range savings, "E" bonds have some advantages: automatic savings plan, no risk.

Protecting Unemployment Benefits

"You say some wage-earners are not aware of their unemployment insurance rights. The men I work with, and myself, have never been clear on whether a man is cut off from unemployment insurance if he refuses a job because of low pay."

—R. L. D., Grand Rapids, Mich.

Answer: This question is often a source of friction between unemployment insurance offices and claimants, and sometimes the misunderstandings lead to loss of benefits. So it's wise to know the rule to protect yourself. Each state has its own administrative rules, but Federal law states that the state cannot deny a wage-earner payments for refusing to accept a job if wages, hours or other conditions are substantially poorer than those prevailing for similar work in the area. It's wise to read the information on your own state's law prepared by your state employment security office or your union; to keep a record of dates of employment, earnings and employers, and to file a claim promptly if you lose your job.

Railroader's Benefits

"On account of reduction of forces, I may be working under Social Security during slack railroad employment. What would my status be if I were recalled to railroad service? I know of no Social Security credits that I may have, but expect to check on this."

—M.D.M., Wymore, Neb.

Answer: Many railroad workers have this problem of dual coverage under both Social Security and the Railroad Retirement plan. Here's the rule governing benefits: If you have 120 months of railroad service, you and your family will get payments from the Railroad Retirement plan. But if you have less than 120 months of rail work by the time you retire or die, your railroad credits will be transferred to Social Security and benefits will be paid by the Social Security Administration.

Now here's a significant point every railroader should know: If you have enough time in both rail and non-rail employment you can collect both rail and Social Security retirement payments. That is, you need both the 120 months of rail service, and the number of calendar quarters required for Social Security. Take a hypothetical character named John, who reached his fiftieth birthday the first half of 1955. John works for a railroad now but before that worked eight years in a non-rail job. Thus he has 32 quarters but needs 38. He can get the other six by working on the side under Social Security even if he earns only $50 a quarter—less than four bucks a week. This would assure him at least a minimum Social Security pension as well as rail benefits.

Railroaders (or anyone else) can find out how much Social Security credit they have accumulated in non-rail jobs by writing to the Social Security Administration, Candler Bldg., Baltimore 2, Md., stating name, address, birth date and Social Security number.

At 72, No Limit

"My father is 74. Being self-employed, he never paid into Social Security until a few years ago. I have questioned his paying after reaching 65 and he doesn't know exactly why he pays. Is he entitled to benefits now? And is he to continue payments?"

—J.A.V., State College, Pa.

Answer: Once anyone reaches 72 he can collect Social Security no matter what he earns (whether self-employed or on a job). Your father should apply now. He will also get some back payments. However, even while collecting benefits he still must pay the Social Security tax on any earnings.

Pro and Con

Darkest Africa

Of the many stories and articles in the March issue, I would like to add my praise to that of the many others who will write in about the novel, "Tell It on the Drums."

I graduate from the University of Saskatchewan this year and, although 22 years of age, have never been so moved by a story before as to write to the editor. I read widely, and I believe Robert Krepps has both a fine imagination and a good knowledge of the African scene as it was in the early days of Cecil Rhodes.

I would suggest that this be made into a book, for those who do not read BLUEBOOK. It would certainly be a best seller.

G. S. Palmer, *Saskatoon, Sask., Can.*

"Tell It on the Drums" has just been published in book form by Macmillan and will be made into a movie.—ED.

I am sincerely delighted with your presentation of "Tell It on the Drums." Hamilton Greene's illustration comes very close to being my favorite, far better than I hoped for, even in a magazine whose illustrations have been pleasing me for 20-odd years. I think he did an exciting and beautifully balanced job.

Incidentally, I think I have probably sold a few extra copies of the March issue in the Allegheny Valley by giving interviews concerning Me and BLUEBOOK to two of the local papers. Matter of fact, the store around the corner sold out eight copies between 10 A.M. and noon today.

If I may speak as a reader and not a writer for a moment, the let's-go-back-to-the-Thirties boys are full of nostalgic applesauce. You are doing a damn nice job with the old magazine. Keep it up.

Robert W. Krepps, *Cheswick, Pa.*

Naughty Lady

My husband and I like BLUEBOOK very much. Please don't cheapen your magazine with covers like the March issue. We don't feel we can have suggestive material in the house with three children. They've saved many covers for their scrapbooks, but after their inquiries of what the "naughty lady" was doing, we removed her.

Mrs. D. C. Gilkison, *Houston, Tex.*

We're sure that if Mrs. Gilkison and husband had read George Fielding Eliot's short novel first, they could have given an explanation inoffensive to the most puritanical tot.—ED.

Pastel-Green Breechclouts

Bought my first copy of BLUEBOOK in a couple of years. Did so strictly on the strength of George Fielding Eliot's name on the cover. It was worth the two bits to read his story, and I look forward to his future yarns. I remember when he was appearing in half the action magazines on the stands. Then his stuff stood out; now it's far better still.

Speaking of stories: I vote for more fiction—a lot more. Because the so-called "true adventure" field for male readers has turned up a couple of good sellers, the whole men's field is switching heavily. I feel that's a mistake, and one that'll soon be apparent. The fiction of dependable writers who research their material is a far better, truer picture than the hidebound little "fact" article. Anyway, how long can this true feature stuff go on? It's gotten so out of hand you find pieces like, "Why the Male Natives of East Matzabula wear pastel-green breechclouts!"

So I say, hurray for the work of Eliot, Krepps *et al* in the March issue. And if I may make a suggestion, why don't you do a story or two on the infant years of war flying, à la Eliot's iron-navy stuff? A suggestion for the man to do it would be Wm. E. Barrett. I'm an aviation enthusiast, and I can tell you, there's quite a clique of WW I air fans building up.

Anyway, thanks for a rejuvenated BLUEBOOK. I look forward to continuing improvement, and if it's forthcoming, here's one returned reader.

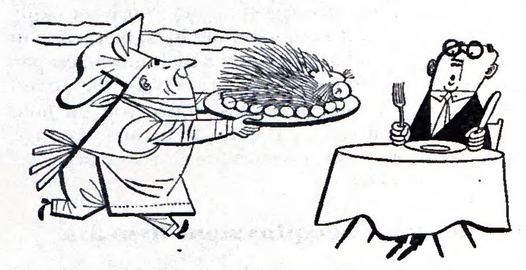
George Evans, *Levittown, N. Y.*

Quills for Toothpicks?

Enclosed is a menu that will show you porcupine listed at $55.

Alvin L. Martin, *Penbrook, Pa.*

By golly, he's right. When Howard Genge asked us (March "Pro & Con") whether there was a New York



City restaurant that served porcupine at something like $75 a plate, we said we didn't know. Just shows we New Yorkers need out-of-towners to teach us about our exotic city.

The menu Mr. Martin sent, which was from Nino's, listed these other delicacies as often available: Mexican armadillo (for 4), $100; Australian kangaroo, $50; musk-rat, $62; beaver and beaver tail, $27.—ED.

Money Questions

Attention Sidney Margolius: Will you please accept the enclosed $6 money order from me. Not in payment for your help on my Social Security problem, but as appreciation on my part for your letter and the informa-

. . . Continued on page 128.

Address all letters to: The Editor, Bluebook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.

Editor's Note:

If you're anything like we are, the thing that gives you even more trouble than your kids, your car and your bowling score is—money. You can't live with it and you can't live without it—a phrase we just made up. It can also be applied to women.

So that's why we asked Sidney Margolius to start the question-and-answer column you'll find up front in this issue. The idea is, he'll get you the low-down on anything about your money—its use (misuse?), saving, investment, handling—that's puzzling you. Whole thing started when he did the article about Social Security in the January issue and rashly offered to answer questions about your particular cases. He got swamped—but was able to tell some readers how to go about collecting amounts up to $1,000-2,000 which were due them.

The hundreds of letters we received indicated there's a pretty substantial need for information in this field. So we worked out the idea for the column in an attempt to meet that need—or part of it. We simply can't answer all questions, unfortunately—Margolius hasn't the time, what with all his other chores—but he will answer those which bear on matters which millions of people should know about. Like veterans' rights and benefits, or railroad retirement plans, or disability payments, or insurance. So write him about your problems—if it's a real emergency he'll answer anyway, even though he doesn't have the time.

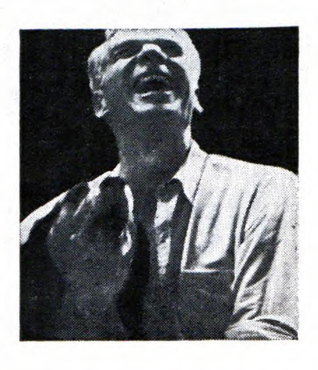
Another thing you'll notice this month is that Bob McCormick has changed the name and widened the scope of his fishing column. Bob completed a year of Angler's Almanac and it looked as though he was going to be repeating himself a good bit if he continued it the same way. So he has broadened the column to include other outdoor activities as well as fishing, and to give tips and advice on new tricks and new equipment which he, as an expert, comes across. To fit this scheme he's changed the title to Man Outdoors, and you'll find it on page 51. As you'll see, he's kept the essential idea and title of Angler's Almanac in a shortened form.

When a new writer comes along who seems exceptionally good, we try to get his stories for you. Sometimes we succeed. So this month we give you Francis Irby Gwaltney, whose "The Day the Century Ended" is our book-lengther. It's his first sale to a magazine, his second novel, and seems destined to create quite a stir in the literary boondocks. It has already been bought by the movies.

Gwaltney wrote the book in a hundred hotel rooms in Arkansas and Louisiana after he'd finished his day's work as a traveling man for J. B. Lippincott, the publishers. To do this consistently enough to finish a long novel requires a kind of self-discipline that leaves us always slightly aghast, immensely respectful, and feeling somewhat inferior.

Gwaltney, who insists he has "no color," worked his way through junior high school as a janitor in the Gem movie theater in Charleston, Arkansas; through high school as a projectionist in the same theater. He was a dogface in the Pacific for about 18 months, which gave him the background for the present novel. He's married, has a daughter, three, is generally considered an overly-fond father and glories in it.

Fellow who wrote the current Men You Never Know is John Kord Lagemann. There's a picture of him around here somewhere with his beagle, Socco, who had just told him one of his favorite shaggy man stories. Picture was taken by John's son, Kord, which may account for the fact that John has been slightly scalped.



John Kord Lagemann

This is the first time John has appeared in BLUEBOOK though, as one of the country's best free-lance writers, he's been in most of the other top magazines, including our two sisters, *McCall's* and *Redbook*. With his wife and two sons, John lives in a part of New York City known as Spuyten Duyvil, "which is Hollandaise for In Spite of the Devil—not a bad motto for free-lance writers."

John grew up in Quincy, Illinois, in the days "when the sound of the calliope from the excursion boats carried way back beyond the town and brought everybody down to the foot of Hampshire Street to marvel at the great sway-back river monsters." He's still a little nostalgic for it. —A. F.



Where They Pay A Guaranteed

For 20 years workers at the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company have been getting 52 pay checks every year. The scheme is attacked by both labor and management, but the workers like it. Here's an impartial report on the plan.

You don't know Hugo Innes and chances are you never will, but what he's saying has considerable meaning for you these days as labor faces capital in a mighty showdown battle. He's talking over a cup of coffee in a plant cafeteria in Milwaukee.

"Those were rough times," Hugo says with a trace of a foreign accent still in his speech. "Back in the 30's, those were really rough times. I worked in the treeing department then. You put the shoes on a tree and wash off the dirt and then you iron out the wrinkles. That's treeing.

"Maybe I'd get three days work one week and the whole next week, I'm laid off. I'd take home about $18, every two weeks. It was no good.

"That's the time the kid came. I can tell you, we had some rough times. No money for coal. It gets cold out here, too, sometimes cold as 15 below. Stalling the landlord. Never knowing when the next pay check was coming. Rough.

"Things are different now. There's a pay check every week, 52 weeks a year. Something's coming in all the time. You can count on it and you can live like a man. Look, I got a house now over at 47th and H. Bought it in '42. It's a one and a half story, nice neighborhood, nine rooms, worth maybe $14,000. I'm not scared any more, like I was back then. It's a good feeling, not being scared."

We were sitting in the cafeteria on the top floor of a block-long, red brick factory building. It's the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company, a modest-sized corporation in a nondescript part of town. But it's completing 20 years of operation under an unusual plan which gives factory workers the security of a steady annual income, regardless of business conditions or factory shutdowns.

What does this mean to you?

Right now we're seeing the opening skirmishes in a struggle which may be one of the most bitter and prolonged ever waged on the labor front in this country—and its outcome is bound to affect virtually every man. The United Automobile Workers of the C.I.O. are squaring off against General Motors and Ford; their present contracts expire during the next two weeks. On the last

Annual Wage

BY LESTER DAVID

day of August, the Chrysler pact also comes to an end and the battle will get underway there too.

There will be other arenas and other participants. The C.I.O. Electrical Workers and General Motors, the National Maritime Union and the East Coast shipping lines.

One issue stands out above all others in these negotiations, an issue which dominates labor's 1955 horizons: the guaranteed annual wage. It is a colossal subject and a colossal debate.

On the one side stand the labor unions and they say:

Take Joe Brady, factory worker. Joe has a wife and three kids. Joe and his family have to eat regularly, pay rent regularly, send money to the gas company, electric company, phone company, oil company and perhaps finance company regularly. Why in the name of common sense shouldn't Joe, and millions like him, be assured of working regularly and thus getting paid regularly?

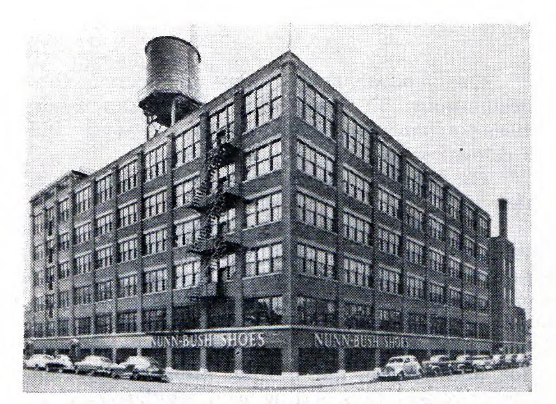
Why should Joe face the spectre of seasonal layoffs and shutdowns, with no money coming in, when his expenses keep right on? Families must live the year round, mustn't they? Well, why shouldn't workers be guaranteed wages the year round?

In sum, say the unions, Joe must have a guarantee from his boss that he will work, or get paid, 52 weeks every year, despite factory closings, despite layoffs, despite anything.

On the other side stands management and it thunders:

Completely unrealistic. Wrong in principle. If our labor costs are fixed, if we have to pay men whether they work or not, we'll be forced out of business, and then where will Joe be?





Main Nunn-Bush plant at Milwaukee. The others are at Whitewater, Wis., and Edgerton, Wis.

Points out General Electric: "It threatens the sound and constructive management of the company . . ." Points out Kenneth R. Miller, senior vice president of the National Association of Manufacturers: Prices will go up if guarantees have to be given and in the long run Joe is bound to find himself paying out of one pocket into another.

"Pure nonsense," snorts G. E. Morse of the Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Company and peppery, redheaded Walter Reuther, U.A.W. and C.I.O. president, retorts: "Management should do less work trying to find reasons why it isn't possible and do more work to find ways to implement the idea."

And so, with the sides poles apart, the test is about to begin.

What's at stake? If wage guarantees can be won in these negotiations, the way would then be cleared for guarantees in other industries. Experts estimate that if the breakthrough is made by the U.A.W. this Spring, other unions will start winning guarantees within two years. That's why labor and capital are watching this battle so closely.

And that's why Hugo Innes, up at Nunn-Bush, is an important guy to talk to these days. He, his co-workers and his bosses know the answers to a few of the questions folks are asking these days.

What, for instance, is a guaranteed wage set-up like? How does it feel to live and work under such a plan? Is it working out for the men and women in the factory? Is it working out for the people who run the factory?

The guaranteed wage plan has been tried out in this country in a number of places and there are at present three major examples of it, all somewhat different. There's one at the George A. Hormel Company in Austin, Minn., a meat-packing firm; there's one at the Procter & Gamble soap products company in Cincinnati, Ohio, and there's one at Nunn-Bush.

(Ever since its inception, this plan in Milwaukee has been called a type of guaranteed wage plan. Newspapers have called it that, so have economists, and so did the National Association of Manufacturers as recently as last year. Henry Lightfoot Nunn, the famed shoe man who initiated the idea, used the word "guarantee" when he discussed it in his autobiography.

(However, the company prefers to say that the plan is designed to give 52 pay checks a year and that it has done so for about two decades. Walter Fanning, the firm's vice president and advertising director, points out that the contract with the union does not mention the word "guarantee," but refers to the plan as "a declaration of mutual understanding." Mr. Fanning likes to call the plan "a continuous but flexible wage.")

I went to Milwaukee, sampled the beer and *Bratwurst* and then took a long, close look at the shoe company's wage set-up. I spoke to workers, to bosses, to workers in other plants, bosses in other plants, and this is an objective report of what I saw and heard.

For the beginning, go back to 1932, the depths of the worst depression America ever experienced. In New York City, men are selling apples on street corners. In Detroit, 150 men and women race to a lunchroom because a dishwasher's job is open. And in Milwaukee, Nunn-Bush lays off about 125 workers completely and gives only half-work to the hundreds of others.

Henry Nunn's Big Idea

This makes a deep impression on Henry Nunn, businessman of deep convictions. So when the nation began climbing out of the slough, Henry Nunn started thinking. "Let's get ready for the next depression," he told colleagues at the plant. "Let's work out a new method of remuneration that will provide continuous income during slack periods, that will give the workers pay in good times and in bad."

"It seemed a large order," said Nunn in retrospect. "Could it be done without being unfair to the stockholders and without throwing an impossible burden on the finances of the company?"

Should it be a flat guarantee, an inflexible yearly wage to one and all, come hell, high water and low sales? Not good. Comes another depression, the guarantee could cripple the firm, even knock it tail over teakettle into bankruptcy.

Well, then, how about giving the annual wage to a selected nucleus of workers and then, if it works, gradually widen the circle? Still not good. This would create an aristocracy of employees that could start jealousies.

How about a switch? Why not give everybody annual salaries but make this important stipulation—if business is less than anticipated, down goes pay; if it's better than expected, up goes pay.

Now, thought Nunn, we are starting to cook. Such a plan would (a) give the boys in the plant the security they need and want and (b) still give management the necessary flexibility to keep labor cost in its proper relation to income.

Pretty excitedly, Nunn went back nine years over his company's records to find out exactly how much of each dollar in sales had been paid out in wages. The result astonished him. Despite high and low prices and wages, the ratio of payroll to the value of goods produced varied less than 3 percent. The high point was 21.17 percent; the low 18.18.

Thus the company had a yardstick and after a year of investigation, fly-specking and general weighing of pros and cons, the plan was formulated, to wit:

Give the factory workers exactly 20 percent of the wholesale value of the goods they produce.

Spread this sum evenly over 52 weekly installments, with each worker's share based on his former hourly rate.

In 1948, the plan was altered a bit so that now the workers' income is controlled by the value of all production, less the cost of raw materials. But the basic idea is unchanged. Specifically, it works like this:

Each employee is given a yearly "differential rate" based upon the skill required for his particular job, the long term volume of his production and the quality of his work. This rate represents a conservative estimate of what he is likely to earn in a year, based on a normal 40-hour week.

Now since it's impossible to estimate in advance how much the company will sell and thus how much each man will earn, drawing accounts are established and the worker gets one fifty-second of his yearly differential rate every week. At the end of each four-week period, when the actual earnings have been toted up, the amount drawn is subtracted from the amount earned. The difference is paid to him in cash—or it can be transferred to his reserve account in the Group Fund, where the employee agrees to maintain at least 25 percent of his yearly differential. This reserve may be used for personal emergencies but its most important function is to be there in case earnings dip. This is the worker's protection against short weeks.

The important thing to remember about the arrangement is that each worker's wage is a percentage of the company's production. His income could rise and fall as prices climb and dip, but in all events it would be continuous. It would, in short, be 52 pay checks a year.

THE PROS AND CONS

Here's how the major arguments for and against the guaranteed annual wage stack up:

	SAYS LABOR	SAYS MANAGEMENT
DEPRESSION	It will help avoid depressions. When employment is stabilized the year-round, a steady flow of purchasing power is assured. When men and plants are idle, farm prices fall and business loses. A floor under the income of wage earners would mean a floor under the national income.	Slumps are caused by a combination of economic factors over which business has no control. By saddling management with fixed labor costs which must be met regardless of how well the company is doing, the plan could very well cause depressions rather than avoid them.
INITIATIVE	We don't want to be paid for not working. But why must we be penalized for not having a job? Psychologically, a man has need for work. He doesn't want to be idle.	The plan puts a premium on idleness. It destroys the incentive to work. Assurance of pay whether they work or don't work will make employees lax and blunt initiative.
HARDSHIPS	The payment of hourly wages is antiquated and obsolete. It is inadequate to meet today's living standards. Hourly-paid workers are subject to layoffs on short notice and hardships are inevitable.	A guarantee may delay the hardship of a layoff but if it weakens the financial structure of a company by a back-breaking burden, it can do more harm to employees in the long run.
FAIRNESS	A company pays for land and buildings by the year in the form of rent. It pays for the use of money by the year in the form of bonds. Since it has such fixed costs as interest, dividends, staff salaries and depreciations, why shouldn't it pay wage earners by the year too?	Anyone familiar with financial statements knows that interest, dividends and depreciation are relatively minor costs that can be safely provided for in advance. And it's a mistake to think that salaried people are immune to layoffs. Their services often are, terminated at short notice.

Thus management and workers are actually partners in a sense. It's as though the buyers of the company's product were asked: "Please split your payments for the shoes into two checks—one going to management to cover the costs of raw materials, manufacturing, sales expenses and earnings for the stockholders, and another going to the workers for their labor in converting the raw materials into the finished product."

Workers who have more than two years' service are eligible for the setup. Those with less time, along with temporary, disabled and aged employees, get wages at hourly rates.

Proof of the Pudding

In July of this year, it will be exactly 20 years since the plan was adopted. How has it worked? As labor and capital begin their titanic struggle, the answer to that one is critical.

Entirely on my own—though with the okay of management—I wandered through the factory, talking to workers. I went through the cutting room, where the rich leather, with the heady smell that sticks with you all through the plant, is sliced from patterns. I spoke to guys of all ages with the unique titles—the skivers, who thin out leather to avoid bulges; the vampers, who sew on the soft part of the shoe right in back of the hard tip; the fancy stitchers, back strappers, cementers, packet drafters and side lasters. Then, to make sure I got an honest count, I spoke to workers outside the factory, on the streets and in the taverns which dot the area between W. North Ave. and Capital Drive.

From all sides, I got the same answer. The sum: "It's a good plan and we like the way it works." Why? The big word on everyone's mind was security.

"Look," said stocky Russell Jaeger, 41-year-old checker in the vast shipping room. "My wife is sick. I've got big medical bills. Can I sleep nights if I work for a place where I can be knocked out of work tomorrow for God knows how long?"

Upstairs, Herbert Dill was just leaving his machine. He's a breast scourer—finishes off the inside of the heel. He bought a home four years ago at 2d St. and Center Ave. Needs $70 a month to pay the bank. "Never missed yet," says Dill. On the same floor is pretty, dark-haired Anna Eberle, a heel padder. Her husband's a machinist with another company in town. "He can get laid off any time," points out Mrs. Eberle, "and all he'll get is the State no-work pay for 26 and a half weeks. It's $33 a week and with our three kids, it's not good."

Later, in one of the taverns fashioned from the downstairs part of a rambling clapboard house, I had a beer with an unemployed factory hand from one of the heavy-machine companies in town. He was one of some 25,000 jobless Milwaukee residents who are haunted by the worry of how to get along when the unemployment compensation runs out. This man had lost his car to the finance company two weeks before and he was afraid that if he doesn't get called back to work soon, the refrigerator will go next.

When I repeated the story next day to Lester Haut, big, capable-looking plant time-study engineer at Nunn-Bush, he nodded and countered with this one to point up the contrast:

"Here's a guy we'll call Nick," said Mr. Haut. "He works here, downstairs. A while back, he fell and broke his leg off the job. Nick can afford to stay home like I can afford a round-the-world cruise twice a year. Yet there he was. Well, Nick drew $65 a week every week like clockwork for a long time. That's not all. He drew an extra $20 sick benefits from the union we got here for seven weeks and still another $20 for 13 weeks from the accident insurance the plant carries."

If Nick had been working in another plant, he



would have received only accident insurance and union sick benefits. No other cash.

So far, it was all sounding pretty Utopian to me.

But now the barbs started to come. I discussed the plan with labor officials outside the plant and with other managements, and got some sharp criticisms.

Declared an official of the U.A.W.:

"That isn't our idea of a guaranteed wage plan at all. The plan we propose says that any employee with two years of seniority when it goes into effect would get paid *for a 40-hour week* every week of the year. But you don't get this at all in the Nunn-Bush system.

"The company says that the workers will get 52 pay checks a year but says nothing about the *size* of the checks. If business is bad, these checks go down. If it gets very bad and there's no work, they stop altogether when the employees' reserves are used up."

Even other managements saw it this way. Points out the General Electric Company in a recent employee-relations newsletter which it distributed among its executives:

"The amounts of the checks are adjusted to the 'value added' in manufacture to the men's shoes which the customers decide to buy. Since the employees have no guarantee as to the quantity of shoes the customers will take, they naturally have no guarantee as to the size of their pay checks. They are guaranteed simply 52 pay checks a year of unguaranteed size."

You Can't Guarantee Customers

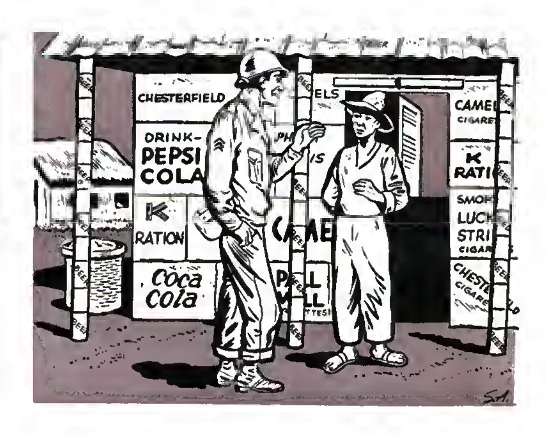
"How about this?" I asked Donald Bartley, executive vice president of the Nunn-Bush company. His reply:

"Let's face it. It's not possible to grant absolute wage guarantees. The customer is the fellow who calls the signals. The company hasn't any control over how much business it's going to do. If the customer doesn't buy the company's product, where is the money coming from to pay wages? Labor is entitled to a fair share of what it produces and this labor receives under our plan. But if we don't make, how can we pay?"

Labor's reply to Mr. Bartley, a reply which will ricochet across the collective-bargaining tables very soon, goes like this:

If management finds it has to pay its workers whether they work or not, management will sure as heck find ways to keep them employed. Therefore, a guaranteed-wage plan, asserts the U.A.W. in a recent brochure, "will provide the strongest practical incentive to employers to plan for regular, full-time, year-round employment for senior workers."

An official of the Wisconsin C.I.O. office in Milwaukee joined the debate. "When you get right down to it," he said, "isn't Nunn-Bush actually



Beer-can Roofs

One of the things that has greatly impressed UN soldiers still in Korea is the ingenuity the people of that wrecked nation have shown in exploiting the routine debris of the armies. From beer cans alone they have fashioned kitchen utensils, tableware, children's pencil boxes, kerosene lamps, dainty filigreed ash trays, and dozens of other useful items. Many factories have been colorfully roofed with beer cans flattened, riveted together, and corrugated.

Several other castoffs have been used in surprising ways. A paint shop on one of Seoul's main streets displays its wares attractively in Coca-Cola bottles. Signal Corps wire reels have become oxcart wheels. Smokestacks of telescoped oil drums can be seen in any city. Half the roofs in Pusan are shingled with stout ration-box cardboard, courtesy of the Quartermaster Corps. And an occasional reminder of past airborne operations is presented by a window tastefully curtained with camouflage-green parachute cloth.

Paper is scarce, and the tons of printed matter discarded by soldiers are carefully collected. One day in Taegu, I was handed my purchase of a few dried persimmons in a dignified sack made out of a page from the Literary Supplement of the London *Times*.

During a recent summer, cheerful tinkling sounds could be heard in UN quarters all over the Seoul area as the results of the most inspired of all salvage jobs. The music came from mobiles made by some clever fellow out of Signal Corps telephone wire and a material that was probably then more abundant in Seoul than anywhere else in the world—broken glass. —By Luke Neely

'guaranteeing' pay checks with the workers' own money? It's like a man who earns $100 a week, but his boss says, 'Look Charlie, you really make a hundred but I'll pay you only $80. The other $20 I'll hold for you and set up a reserve fund which you can tap when business gets bad. If it gets real bad, though, and you use up your reserve, then you've had it, Charlie.'

"Besides," he continued, "if this is the case, the worker can just as easily create his own security by taking all his earnings every week and banking some of it."

It was an eminently logical question and I plunked it into the lap of Mr. Fanning. "Not one man in ten would do it," he replied. "The tendency would be to live up to all the income earned."

You Got It, You Spend It

The workmen themselves agreed with Mr. Fanning's view. "You just arrange to live on your draw," pointed out one black-haired giant at his machine. "The other money, you forget about until you need it." Another man on the same floor asserted: "I know a guy who made sixty bucks a week a year ago and now he makes a hundred sixty in a new business. Couple nights ago he was so broke he couldn't pay for a beer. It's the same story. You got it, you spend it. You ain't got it, you don't spend it." A shipper told me he adjusts his living scale to the amount of his draw and never feels the difference. "But I know I got enough for the insurance payments and the installments when they come due," he said.

The same feeling persisted all through the factory, the feeling that the total amount carried home at the end of each week is not as important to a family as the security of having money there every week. It was a psychological shot in the arm that zoomed morale.

There was barbed criticism, too, of the union at the plant, the independent Industrial Union of Master Craftsmen. "It's not strong," said a local labor leader. "It's not militant. It's just a company union which will knuckle under to management whenever management says the word."

This crack really riled the Nunn-Bush crowd. They retorted angrily that their union was independent, strong, firm and nobody's patsy. Said one workman:

"Both the C.I.O. and the A.F.L. tried to organize this place and they got a free hand to try. We listened but we didn't buy what they had to sell."

Nunn himself reports that after futile organizational activities, C.I.O. representatives reported back to their headquarters: "That's no union at Nunn-Bush. That's a religion." And the reason, points out Nunn, is that "our workers are actually in business for themselves, our partners in a common enterprise."

Unquestionably, there's a spark and a spirit at the Nunn-Bush plant that you don't see many places. Because workers feel themselves partners in the business, production schedules are lived up to readily and a minimum of supervision is needed to get the schedules met. More, management told me quality of workmanship has improved remarkably because the men all realize that anything which hurts production hurts their pay.

There it stands, the Nunn-Bush 52-paychecks-a-year-plan, the baby of a remarkable businessman who came out of Texas a long time ago with a dream and lived to see it realized. It's not a guarantee of a steady annual wage, as the U.A.W. points out and as Nunn, its founder, readily admits. But it's a pioneering step in industrial relations and a successful one as far as workers and the company are concerned.

Successful for three big reasons, as Nunn explains in his recent autobiography, "The Whole Man Goes to Work:"

First, labor costs are no longer rigidly fixed. There's a new flexibility that permits the company to adjust its prices quickly to market demands. Falling prices no longer need result automatically in lessened production.

Second, workers are guaranteed 52 pay envelopes a year without incurring the inflexibility of a guaranteed annual wage at a fixed amount. With labor sharing production and drawing pay each week whether the factory works or not, the craftsman acquires a security he never knew before. "The worker," writes Nunn, "is freed from the haunting fear and insecurity that comes from unemployment and irregularity of income, and the economy does not suffer from the total or partial shutting off of his purchasing power."

Let's Play Partners

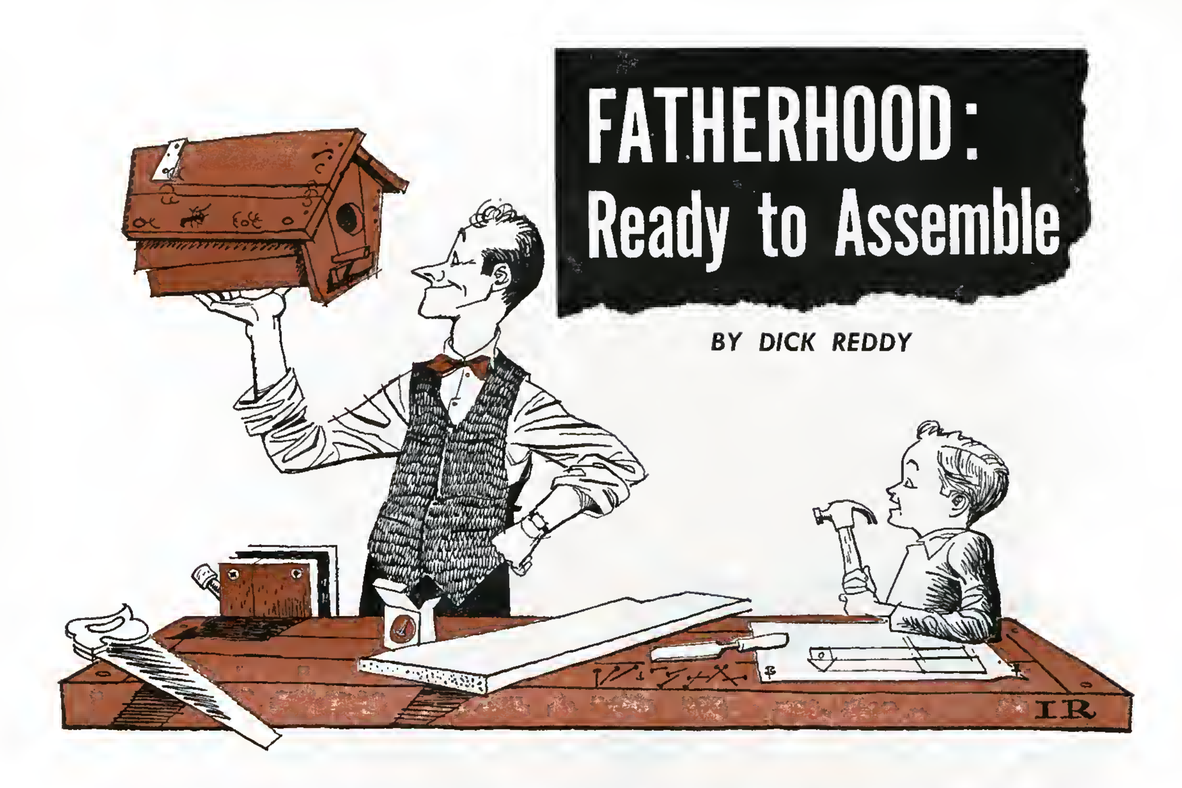
Third, and perhaps most important, is the psychological factor. "Workers who are treated as partners," says Nunn, "who in fact are partners in production, develop a new self-respect and dignity that befits our democratic concept of the inherent rights of man. Suspicion and distrust are removed. There is a new sense of belonging and a pride in 'our' business." It's "our" business, remember, because labor, under the plan, gets a share of what it helps create—if the buyers buy more shoes, labor gets a larger share of earnings.

Outside labor experts tote it all up and conclude: Okay as far as it goes, but it doesn't go nearly as far as we want to go. A step in the right direction, but a longer and greater and firmer stride forward is now needed.

Maybe it will stand there in Milwaukee, this Nunn-Bush plan, as an industrial curiosity, examined, probed and tut-tutted at now and then by visiting economists.

Or it might well be a preview of a brand-new day for labor. —By Lester David

FATHERHOOD: Ready to Assemble



BY DICK REDDY

A constructive way for an old block and his chip to cement relations is to build something from a kit—if Dad will take the right assembly line.

EVERYBODY WHO READS or who watches TV knows that practically all criminals got their start in crime when their fathers rejected them. You've seen it yourself: The young hoodlum, his bravado finally shattered by the kindly old judge, grabs his head in his hands and sobs: "Sure I killed her! Me old man had no time for me, d' bum!"

Now, no father likes to feel that someday his son will call him a bum, at least not in night court. Obviously, the way to prevent this is to make a pal of the kid while he's young. Spend time with him, play games with him. Especially, share a hobby with him.

Nowadays, hobbies are the biggest thing since mah-jongg. Grandmothers are getting their aprons caught in model airplane propellers. Optimistic apartment dwellers are building express cruisers in their living rooms. The sale of sandpaper has scratched up new records.

The kids, especially, have been bitten by the hobby bug and thousands of shops that were going broke trying to sell penny candy for six cents are cleaning up on kits for everything from prairie schooners to supersonic fighters.

Of course, there's nothing new about boys (and adults) wanting to build things, but it didn't used to be so highly organized. The average man or boy just grabbed a piece of wood and whatever tools were at hand and knocked something out. If his family and friends recognized it when it was finished he was pleased as Punch and enjoyed a reputation for being "handy" for the rest of his life. Historians point out that this was a period of intensive father-son companionship, since practically all the home handicraft books and magazines of the time were full of pictures of a man and a boy gloating over their almost-completed masterpiece. This was invariably a bird house, hence the period is referred to in scholarly circles as the Bird House Era. In practice, it worked something like this:

When Junior was around seven, he woke up one morning with the creative urge breaking out like a rash. He immediately braced his old man

Illustrations by Ian Ross

for a hammer, saw and nails. Pop automatically objected that Junior would cut his arm off, but ended by promising to help him build a bird house on Saturday.

Junior was up prying Pop's eyelids open at dawn on the great day. In due time a corner of the work bench was cleared off. Then, while Dad lectured on the Fun of Doing It Yourself, they knocked apart a wooden box for materials.

By more or less reassembling the box (the pieces mysteriously lost all their right angles in the process) the crew contrived to turn out something that might have been taken for a bird house (or a box) in a dim light, although it would have taken an extremely broadminded bird to look upon it as anything but emergency, even disaster, housing.

The net result was excellent. Both Pop and Junior got the creative urge out of their systems for a while. Pop felt a warm glow at having done right by Junior as he slipped down behind the dope sheet. Junior was satisfied too—he knew, now, where the tools were hidden. A couple of squirrels moved into the bird house and got rid of all the birds in the yard.



After pretending to check each piece against the instructions, he announces that a key part is missing, and retreats to the TV set.

Now, though, handicraft is big business. At first this would seem to be great news for the conscientious father. Here are all the materials, tidily packaged and explained. The parts are often already cut. Even tools are provided in some kits.

Trouble is, they've improved the hobby materials, but Pop is still the same old model. Or, to be more accurate, there are still only two kinds of fathers, those who can work with their hands and those who can't.

Because he represents the great majority, let's take Joe Sportspage first. He's no hobby nut. His hands are all thumbs and a yard wide and he can't get a coin into a parking meter without a funnel.

It wasn't too tough for a guy like Joe to get away with building a bird house with little Willy. After all, no bird has ever come right out and said what a bird house should look like. To Willy, though, a bird is just something that gets singed in a jet exhaust. Bird house, hell! Let's build a control-line fighter! If Joe is smart, at this point he'd take Willy to a double-header and forget the whole thing. But Joe wants to do right by Willy. Sure, Buddy-boy, I'll help you bat out a plane!

Next day Joe steps around to the hobby shop (there are dozens of them). The completed models look pretty complicated, but the signs are reassuring. "Pre-Cut," "No Tools Needed," "Simple ABC Construction." Why, this is kid stuff! Wrap up that red job.

Joe and Willy clear off the dining-room table. (Many modern homes have no cellar. A lot of them have no dining room, either, in which case Joe and Willy have a bit of a problem.) Anyhow, they find a corner and get to work.

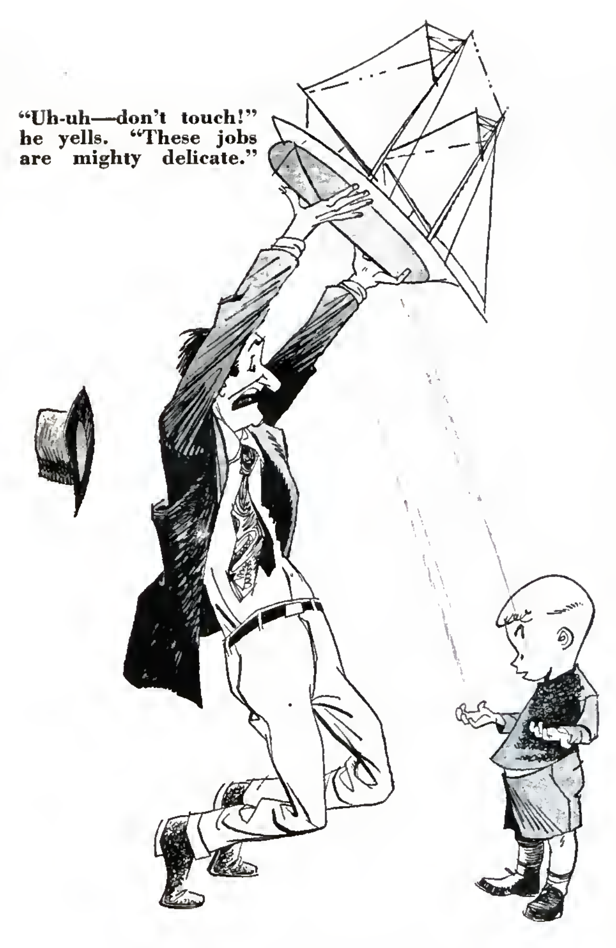
Let's read the little old instructions first. Hmm. "Assemble A to B, then cement both to C." How's that again? Oh! Still—how can it? No? But it *has* to fit! Hey! This stuff takes off varnish, eh?

After about twenty minutes of this, either Willy takes a hand and figures the thing out, or Joe gives up altogether.

There are two ways in which Joe can escape. He can remember an important engagement and take off, leaving the wreckage to Willy. If Joe does this, though, he'll have a sneaking feeling that he's set Willy's feet on the path to Alcatraz and he'll get pretty maudlin over it after his eighth or ninth beer. This spoils Joe's (and the barkeep's) evening.

A much better out for Joe when the thing gets too tough is for him suddenly to put down the instructions and, taking up the box of parts, peer into it suspiciously. He then dumps the box and picks up each part in turn, pretending to check it against the instructions. In this way he goes through the whole box—twice if Willy looks skeptical. When he is finished he turns to Willy with as much disappointment and indignation as he can manage and announces that the most important part is missing. If Willy will swallow this bit of business Joe is in the clear, at least temporarily, and can get back to television.

Herb Scalejob is the opposite type. He has the hobby craze himself and he's had it a long time. He outgrew ready-cut kits before they discovered that celluloid was a plastic. Herb's the guy who supports the local hobby shops and the walls in his home can just about support his hobbies. Trains, boats, planes, cars, pipe racks, cabinets—he builds them all. And, between projects, Herb has found time to have a son.


"Uh-uh—don't touch!" he yells. "These jobs are mighty delicate."

At first glance it would seem that Herb has a set-up when it comes to helping young Buster. Actually, he's worse off than Joe the Hobbying Half-Wit.

Until Buster is seven or so, most of Herb's time is spent fighting him away from the models. That ship model used to be on the hall table when Buster was born. Now it's hanging from a beam in the attic and if Buster gets two inches taller it's boarding school for him. Buster can cut up the family cat, but if he makes a breeze while Herb is shellacking a hat rack the blast wrinkles the wallpaper.

Then, suddenly, Buster stops shinnying up lamps after Herb's models. He wants to build his own. It's a wonderful moment for Herb. His son is ready for models! A chip off the old balsa block!

Herb hits the hobby shop, rubbing his hands. Trouble is, he immediately forgets that he's buying for Buster. Oh, he has it in the back of his mind, but Herb in a hobby shop is like a dipso who wakes up and finds himself locked in a gin mill for the night. As soon as he spots a tricky new item that just came in his blood begins to percolate and, instead of buying the pre-cut barge kit that would have given Buster a fighting chance, he walks off with $12 worth of detail-scale Chris-Craft.

He rushes home. He can't even wait until after dinner and shows the kit to Buster and Wifey over the hamburgers. A few of the smaller parts fall into the coffee, but Herb is happy as a lark. Not only is he setting Buster right from the beginning, he's got a legitimate excuse to settle down to some serious modeling.

Buster, too, is all hopped up. He's caught the fever and, so far as he's concerned, the model is practically finished. All that has to be done is to paint it like the picture on the box and set it up in his room.

Herb shows Buster the plans (as many as he can lay out on the living-room floor) and brings out the tools. Then Buster makes his first *faux pas.* He picks up a razor blade. Herb sees this and turns pale.

"You're holding it all wrong! Here, like this!" He grabs a sheet of wood and begins to cut. Buster watches until Herb is finished, then wants to try it himself. Not a chance. Herb is far gone and can't even hear. He's forgotten that Buster is still there.

Two hours later Buster is howling and his mother is promising to buy him a boat of his own. Herb comes up for air and focuses on the kid. "What's the matter? Don't you want to work on your boat?"

Buster tries again, but he's obviously retarded. He fumbles a bit and Herb nearly has a breakdown watching him try to cement a bulkhead to the keel. He shows Buster how by taking over completely.

So it goes until the model is finished. On the great day Herb calls Buster in (oddly, the lad hasn't been hanging around the bench lately). "How do you like it? . . . Uh-uh—don't touch! These jobs are mighty delicate. . . . Well, I don't think it would be a good idea to put it in your room right away. Might get knocked down. How about right here in *my* cabinet? Hey, Buddy?"

"Buddy" is led away screaming. He's finished with hobbies until he's big enough to build his own zip gun.

Bird houses, anyone? —BY DICK REDDY

make it easy

A PERFECT SANDBOX for children can easily be made by painting a ruined tractor tire a bright color and filling the center with sand. Most tire stores will be glad to give you a ruined tire, or sell one for a few cents.

—Lyle Holub, Crosby, N. D.

Bluebook *will pay $5 for each "Make It Easy" published, but none can be acknowledged or returned.*

the RUMBLE

BY FREDERIC SINCLAIR

He was turning an honest buck spraying fruit trees by helicopter, when along came the man with the gun. Tomorrow, he said, you'll be dusting cops instead of crops.

HIS SHADOW fell across me where I hunkered by the helicopter repairing the dust hopper. I looked over my shoulder and up. I saw him standing there in the sun and my stomach seemed to drop and then tighten.

I played it blank. I said, "Yes, sir?"

He was a neat guy, just like he'd always been, even in stir. Neat blue suit. Neat, black, pointed shoes. Neat snap-brim hat. Even his smile was neat.

He said softly in that hoarse voice, "It's been a long time, Sid."

I got up, wiping my hands on my coveralls, facing him. "It's so long ago I've forgotten you, Blackie," I told him. "Scram."

He kept smiling but his lips thinned out over his white teeth. "I told Hymie and Rocco you'd be glad to see an old cell-mate," he said quietly. "You haven't changed a bit, Sid. Still a tough boy."

"Blow, Blackie," I said. "I got work to do. Honest work. You saw me. I saw you. Good-by."

He shook his head. "No dice, Sid. You were a good pilot in the old days. I got plans for a good, hep pilot." His gaze trailed over the helicopter.

My temper came up in me and I reached for him. He stepped back fast, and then the .38 was



steady and big and lethal in his hand. He said mildly, "You oughta know better than that, Sid. I never did like guys with reflexes." He looked beyond the helicopter to the bungalow. "You got some cool place we can sit and talk?" It wasn't a question. It was an order.

I reckoned the time. My wife Rusty and the boys were in town shopping. Maybe I could get rid of him before they got back. Inside my belly, inside my head, I was numb. Blackie and his rod had rolled back the years. One minute I was clean, a respected member of this citrus-growing community I'd settled in. Nothing on my mind except the respectable worry of how I was going to pay for the bungalow and helicopter I'd mortgaged my soul to buy, because in this fruit-growing neck of the woods an eggbeater pilot like me could pick up an honest buck spraying orange and lemon groves with in-



secticide. I was poor but I was clean. The next eye-wink, Blackie was standing over me in the sun and the past had crowded up. Without him telling me, I knew I was back in the racket.

I said dully, "There're chairs on the porch."

So we sat on the porch and talked. We talked about sticking up the Grower's Bank in Scarsdale.

"It's a cinch," Blackie said. "The crib's a virgin bank and they've grown careless. The manager gets there every morning at eight on the dot, a half hour ahead of the rest of the help. He's in there alone for half an hour. The time mechanism on the vault breaks open at 8:15. All we have to do is walk in with the manager, wait around for the vault to open, walk out. For two good inside men like Rocco and me, and an experienced 'get' driver like Hymie, the heist is a breeze. What with the heavy deposits on certain days, the take should total 80 G's."

I said, "You've got the inside man. You've got the outside get driver. Why squeeze me in? You want me to pick up an extra buck hawking programs?"

Blackie said, "The getaway is suicide if anything goes wrong. There's only one road out of town that goes any place. That's south. Comes a rumble, they'll have a roadblock up outside of town at that state-police barracks soon as anybody lifts up a telephone." He gave me a long look. "If we hadn't known you were down here operating this two-bit crop-dusting outfit we'd never even have cased the crib."

I gave him a blank look. He had his file out and was working on his fingernails. He flicked a quick glance at me, went back to his manicuring. "The helicopter, Sid," he said casually. "It's the cinch play. We'll rendezvous at that old water-filled gravel pit outside town. You and the eggbeater'll arrive there at dawn and wait behind the trees for us to show. We'll nose-dive the get car into the gravel pit. We'll pile aboard the eggbeater. We can be over the mountains into the next state in an hour. I've got a legitimate car stashed there waiting."

It was neat, and about as foolproof as a bank stick-up can ever be. They had it all planned nicely. They had floor plans of the bank. They'd clocked the bank manager's work-day habits. The getaway to the old gravel pit where the trees would screen a waiting helicopter from the road was mapped. The layout plans even gave them an emergency exit via an alley door if there was a rumble.

Blackie said gently, "You're the pivot, Sid. You and that eggbeater."

"Supposing I don't pivot?"

He didn't smile at me. He sneered at me. "You'll pivot," he said. "You'll pivot or I'll have to write some letters and make some anonymous phone calls. I'll write so many letters and do so much telephoning you'll wish you were back in stir, what with the pressure you'll get from the law . . . and your wife."

I got my legs under me and started coming up from the chair. He threw down on me again with the .38. He said, "You've got to get rid of them reflexes, Sid. You make me nervous when you get reflexes. Now relax."

I relaxed. Blackie had me cold. I knew it. He knew it. I'd run with the wild bunch. I'd done time for it, along with Blackie. He knew and I knew there was still some unfinished business with the law that I would sooner forget. But some district attorneys have long memories. He knew and I knew that I'd never told my wife, Rusty, about those old days. About the mob. About the jail term I'd served. A good wife, and kids, and the pride of a man who is going straight, don't encourage confessions that can topple everything he'd thought was solid and safe.

Blackie watched me. I could no more help asking the question than I could resist picking up a dollar bill lying in the gutter. "How much," I wanted to know, "is there in it for me?"

Blackie grinned. To him, that did it. He tucked the heater back under his coat. "You'll be taken care of," he said. It was neither a promise nor a threat. It was both.

Kind of sick-like, I watched Rusty and the kids as they unpacked the groceries in the kitchen. Then I did just as Blackie had told me to do. I went outside and began to work on the helicopter, and my mind went to work on me and it wasn't just the sun that made me sweat.

The sun was going down over the hills when Rusty came out on the kitchen porch to call that I was wanted on the phone.

It was Blackie. "Hymie and me will be out later."

"Don't hurry," I told him shortly.

His voice didn't alter. "We've learned something. Probably be a change of plans. That eggbeater ready?"

"I'm working on it."

"Where'll you be? We can't talk in the house with your wife and kids around. Or can we?" He was rubbing it in.

"I'll be in the hangar. You'll see the lights."

"You still got them reflexes, Sid?"

"Drop dead," I said, and hung up.

I came back out into the kitchen. At the stove, Rusty asked curiously, "Who was that, Sid?"

"A guy who stopped by this afternoon," I said. "Wants a crop-dusting demonstration. He's a grower farther north." I managed a grin. "You and the kids can watch TV without disturbance. I'll talk to him in the hangar."



"Ah, there you are, you little rascal, you!"
Bluebook

The shack I laughingly called a hangar was set behind the house, a dinky thing I'd built more to shelter the 'copter than anything else. Most of the maintenance work was done outside during daylight. I'd rigged up an old desk and chair in one corner. What with my tools and the helicopter and the desk there wasn't much room left to spread three guys around inside the hangar. But Blackie and Hymie and I managed to fit inside it that night.

Hymie was a thick-shouldered guy with eyes like dum-dum bullets. I remembered him from the old days as being heavy on muscle and light on brains. He had a reputation for his cool ability to tool a get car smooth and fast no matter what the rumble. Once he'd driven down an old man hobbling across the street during a getaway. I'd always detested the guy and he hadn't improved any with age.

Rocco, the absent member of the troupe, I'd met only once in the past. A dark, barrel-chested little man who liked to kill.

Hymie gave me that dumb grin of his when they came in. "You're getting fat, Sid," he said.

"It's the honest life," I told him from behind the desk. "I'm not running away all the time."

Neat as ever, Blackie swung a trim leg over the corner of the desk. "You're starving standing still, eh, Sid? That eggbeater ready?"

I shrugged. "Just about."

"Rocco says the bank deposits were heavy today. Over 100 G's. We pull the job tomorrow morning."

I gave him an incredulous stare. "The 'copter ain't that ready!"

Blackie's gaze was cool. "You mean the helicopter, Sid, or do you mean yourself?"

"Both," I told him truthfully. "The 'copter should have a pre-flight test. And so should I."

He leaned across the desk so that he balanced on a buttock, supporting himself with an elbow, his eyes on a level with mine. "Give it a pre-flight test at dawn," he said sharply, "on your way to the gravel pit." He was all tough now. "I don't want no more reflexes!"

The tension was punctured by Hymie. He gave a belly laugh and said, "You're gonna dust them cops off tomorrow, fly boy, instead of orange groves."

Blackie laughed. "A cop-duster!" he said. He grinned at me. "A crop-duster turned cop-duster, eh, Sid?"

"Yeah," I said. I grinned along with him, wondering if he could see the gleam of the light bulb that had clicked on inside my head. I had an out. Screwy and chancy and liable to misfire, but an out a guy could latch onto and gamble with.

Blackie hauled out floor plans of the bank, marked maps of the town and highways leading out of it. An aerial map of the mountains showed an inked X in the next state where the legitimate car was hidden. He hadn't missed a trick.

He spread the maps and the plans out on the desk. "We'll make a dry run so that we all get our cues right," he said. "If the timing's on the nose we can't miss." He brought his head up to give me a hard stare. "Your reflexes behaving, Sid?"

"They're behaving," I told him.

When they left, I went back up to the house. Rusty, in her green housecoat that set off the red of her hair, and the kids in their pajamas, were curled up in a warm threesome on the davenport watching TV. I came up behind Rusty and rubbed my nose in the curls at the back of her neck.

"Don't wait up for me," I said in her ear. "That demonstration flight I mentioned goes off early tomorrow morning and I'll be working half the night on the 'copter."

I went into the bedroom and got my jacket out of the closet. I dug down in a zippered pocket of my old Marine flight bag and found the .45. I located the clip and shoved it into the gun. I stuck the .45 into my pants waist. I slipped into the jacket and zippered it up to hide the butt of the gun. I walked back out into the living room, crossed between the TV set and the family, and went out into the kitchen.

Searching around in the unlighted back hall, I found the cardboard carton of six empty beer bottles. In a kitchen drawer I located corks. I let myself out the back door and crossed the yard to the hangar. It was some night. No moon. But the sky sagged with stars . . .

It must have been around two o'clock in the morning when the 'copter was about as ready as it ever would be, mechanically. I started patching up the dust hopper that had been giving me trouble, and then I rigged it to the outside fuselage of the

helicopter. There are two of these big hoppers, one on each side of the fuselage, both actuated by electric motors controlled by switches on the instrument panel. I installed new brushes in the motors and after a while they hummed like nicely-tuned sewing machines.

I took the doors off the 'copter bubble and made sure the pilot's safety belt was joined solidly to the seat and was unfrayed around the buckle end. Then I loaded the hoppers. Two hundred and fifty pounds of DDT insecticide went into each hopper. I tossed the limp dust sacks in a corner. I wedged the carton of empty beer bottles into the narrow space between the instrument panel and the seat. That way, the bottles would be in easy reach of my right hand when I was flying.

Carefully, then, I filled each empty beer bottle with the gasoline and other incendiary ingredients one uses when mixing a Molotov cocktail. I corked the six bottles and nested them in the beer carton that was now an improvised cardboard bomb rack.

Before it was light, I jockeyed the helicopter out of the hangar and got it idling so I could check the instruments. It had that smooth, clean sound that engines have when there's dew in the air, like there was this hushed morning. Switching the motor off, I went back inside the hangar, dug the high-powered binoculars out of a desk drawer and turned out the lights.

I climbed aboard, started the motor again, and lifted the helicopter straight up to 1,000 feet. It was going to be some day. Cloudless and warm and with a little wind. I pointed the nose of the 'copter toward Old Baldy, a sugar-loaf hill that was not quite a mountain, rising to the east of Scarsdale like a hairless pate.

The sun was just a tint in the sky when I eased the helicopter down on a platform-like stretch of moss-covered rock just below the crown of the hill. I cut the engine.

Down below, the groves stretched outward in neat, marching lines of drowsing trees. To the west, the hub of the groves that filled this valley, was the town of Scarsdale, like a rural picture you see on a calendar, what with the spires of its churches showing white above the trees. I got the binoculars to my eyes, made an adjustment, and took a fix.

The treeless Main Street came sharply into focus. I brought the binoculars down the right side of the street. There was some traffic. The untenanted parking spaces drifted by, their meters all showing violation flags. A few pedestrians ambled past, mostly canners and shopkeepers on their way to work. The bank slid into view.

The sun scaled Old Baldy, and down below the valley and the town came alive with sun-reflected green and white. I lighted a cigarette. Three cigarettes later, the gray sedan coasted to a stop in the no-parking area.

Hymie got out of the driver's seat, went around to the front of the car, and raised the hood. A man carrying a newspaper under his arm, bore down on the bank entrance with the measured stride of a man who has opened a bank door on the dot for half his life. He never even looked at the idling car.

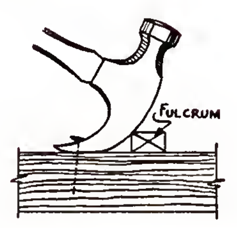
He swung up the steps of the bank, digging in a pocket for his keys. Hymie slammed the hood down. The back door of the sedan opened and Rocco piled out and then Blackie. They crowded up behind the bank manager, all businesslike and without any waste motions. There was no fuss. Bank manager, Blackie and Rocco, clustered for an eye-wink outside the big door, the shoulders of Blackie and Rocco screening the manager. Quite suddenly, they were inside the bank.

I began to count to a slow 500, dragging on a cigarette as I counted. Behind me, the sun kept coming up. I reached 500 and punched the starter and the big rotor blade took hold. I goosed the engine and then let it idle for a long, calculated minute before I lifted the 'copter straight up.

The sun topping Old Baldy flooded the doorless bubble of the helicopter, warm and clean. I came down the valley with the sun behind me, and the groves of silent trees drifting beneath me at first, then sliding under me in a green blur as I dropped the eggbeater to treetop level.

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make it easy



Pulling nails out of wood, like pulling rabbits out of a hat, is simple—if you know the tricks. Try these: Use a wrecking bar whenever you can . . . When using the claw of a hammer, slide a small piece of hardwood under the claw close to the nail. The chunk of wood becomes a fulcrum that increases leverage and takes strain off the hammer handle . . . If a nail you're trying to pull refuses to budge, or if the head has broken off, bend back and forth the part of the nail that's above the surface until it breaks off. Then hammer the stub flush to the wood, or else "set" it into the wood with a punch . . . Sometimes, when the head has come off, you can get a firm grip on a nail by jamming it into the tapered slot of the hammer claw until the edges of the slot chew into the nail.

—Louis Martin Reitz, Bourbon, Mo.

From this low altitude, only the slim, white spires of the Catholic Church pointed the way to town. Rising above the trees a block due west of the bank, that church steeple and sun-spangled cross was my fix. The rocketing helicopter burst from the groves. Outskirts of the town swept past below in a fuzz. I throttled off and to anybody down below it must have seemed that I skidded out of nowhere over the flat, graveled roof of the Bijou Theater directly across the street from the bank.

The helicopter hovered there, above the startled street, just as Blackie and Rocco emerged from the bank and started down the front steps toward the waiting sedan.

Something must have gone wrong inside. Rocco's leg dragged. Blackie's hat was gone. But he had a burlap bag and there was weight to it.

Rocco saw and heard me simultaneously as I skidded over the theater to drop and hover above them. His reflex was a marvel to see. The bucking chattergun swept the street and then came up smoothly to buck at me and the 'copter. Its lead made a nasty, ripping sound where it tore into the craft. Blackie didn't even waste a shot at me, leaving the anti-aircraft department up to the limping Rocco.

The din down there must have been terrific. I had the .45 out and punched a shot down. The slug gouged stone from the sidewalk at Rocco's feet. He began to run for the car, limping. Blackie was already piling aboard, and Rocco probably knew that Blackie wouldn't linger for a tardy passenger.

I wheeled in the air, hung the 'copter over so that my weight strained at the safety belt, speared a beer bottle from the case, and tossed it out. It must have exploded at Rocco's feet, running into it like he was. There's not much smoke to a Molotov cocktail. Just a bursting glare of flame. He never knew what hit him. One minute he was a running, living, breathing man. The next, he was a cinder. Smoking a bit, his body sprawled on the sidewalk near the curb.

Hymie tooled the car out into the main stem. The sedan was hitting about 50 in second gear as they reached the first red signal. They burst under it, grinding into high and probably touching 70 as they roared through the startled town. I tailed along, just above them, not daring to toss a beer bottle here where there was traffic. Other than me, there was no pursuit.

Hymie wheeled the get car down the center of the main stem at terrific speed. Traffic seemed to melt away from them. They were obviously gambling to reach and pass the state-troopers' barracks before a roadblock could be erected. The town thinned out. I eased up above the speeding car, keeping to Hymie's side, got a beer bottle, kicked the helicopter over on its side, and lobbed



"My, what a fascinating grain . . ."

the Molotov cocktail so that it exploded to the left of the car. I could have dropped the bottle right on top of them, but a blazing car out of control might have proved fatal to others.

The exploding Molotov so unnerved Hymie that the car swerved, skidded, climbed a curb, went up over the sidewalk, jounced across a couple of lawns and damn near overturned before Hymie fought the wheel to bring it back to the street. The speeding car rocked and then straightened out as Hymie tramped down on the gas. They roared past the Thank You, Come Again sign that marked the town's limits. Then they were racing down the level stretch of highway that took a gradual curve past the water-filled gravel pit and then climbed upward to top a rise.

Right there, my plan to crop-dust Hymie and Blackie into the arms of the law opposite the state-police barracks, roadblock or not, misfired. A school bus changed those plans. And a grower's truck that was still invisible among the trees to the right of the road.

From the air, I spotted the school bus about a half mile ahead, lumbering along the narrow highway like a fat, yellow bug. I knew that at this hour the bus was loaded with kids on their way to the district central school the other side of town.

My two kids would be aboard that school bus, toting their primers and the lunches that Rusty always packed a surprise in. There'd be a lot of shrill noise in that school bus. Mrs. Proudy, the veteran school-bus driver, would be keeping one eye on the road ahead and the other on the big rear-view mirror so she could keep tabs on her charges.

Down below, the rocketing car hit the dip in the road and roared into the straight stretch that extended for a quarter of a mile before the highway

took the gradual curve around the water-filled gravel pit. Once past the gravel pit, the road climbed up to the rise. From where I sat, it needed only a glance to judge distance and speeds of bus and car and calculate that speeding car and lumbering bus would probably meet at the top of the hill where the bus made a scheduled stop to pick up the school children I could see clustered alongside the road.

My hands sweat suddenly on the control stick. Halfway up the hill, bumping and lurching off a dirt road and then turning south on the highway to begin its grinding, low-gear crawl to the crest of the hill, a fruit-loaded grower's tractor-trailer truck seemed to fill the highway, its diesel engine spewing smoke from the outlet stack behind and above the cab.

The horrific picture of what might happen in a matter of seconds came into focus behind my eyes. Hymie, his foot heavy on the accelerator, would swerve out to pass the slow-moving tractor-trailer as it topped the crest. And just behind the crest, unseen by Hymie and Blackie until a pulse-beat before the moment of shattering impact, the yellow school bus would be stopped on the highway, its red light blinking, its STOP flag up, loading children.

From above, speeds of bus and truck and hurtling car seemed drawn by a ruthless magnet to the crest of the hill, where speeding car and parked school bus would collide in a holocaust of twisted metal and shattered glass and the screams of mangled children.

The careening car leaned over on its shocks as it hit the curve at the far end of the gravel pit. Just looking at it you could hear the tires scream as they clung to the pavement. My mind said: The hell with the trees and the telephone wires!

I shoved forward on the stick and the helicopter dropped, car and highway rushing up to meet me. Threading the roadside trees and strung telephone wires was a stomach-tightening maneuver. I came in low over the roof of the car and got out ahead, following the ribbon of highway, only a yard or so above it, jockeying the helicopter so that I'd meet the rise of road instead of flying into it.

I punched the button switch that controlled the twin hoppers on each side of the fuselage and flicked the volume control wide open. The 'copter lurched, like it always does when you start spewing DDT from the hoppers. In the rear-view mirror I'd rigged up on the side of the 'copter, I caught a brief glance of Hymie at the wheel and Blackie's head and shoulders out the window, a chattergun bobbing as he tried to steady it on me. Then the DDT gushed out of each hopper in a blinding, biting, white smoke and the gray sedan disappeared in the thick dust.

I grabbed a beer bottle and hurled it back. The white dust boiled red behind me as the Molotov exploded on the highway. Ahead, the road bent around the gravel pit and then began the ascent to the crest. I skidded around with the road, trailing a double-barreled blast of insecticide from two wide-open hoppers, tossing beer bottles out behind me like a bombardier gone berserk.

Up ahead, the square tail of the tractor-trailer seemed to rush at me. I kept at highway level until the mass of the truck filled the cockpit windshield. Hauling back on the stick I managed to clear the truck by inches. Down below, I could see the startled driver hanging out the window. The truck veered and then he was frantically pulling off the road as I skidded around in a belly-tightening turn that shook the helicopter but missed the wires and trees.

Behind, the road was gone, obscured by the heavy dust. As I made the turn, the gray sedan, grayer still in the dust, burst from the low-hanging smoke screen on the gravel-pit side. I caught a fragmentary glimpse of Hymie wrestling the wheel. Then the car went into a long skid, sideswiped a telegraph pole, bounced off, rolled completely over, leaped a culvert, and went up and over the edge of the gravel pit in a slow-turning cartwheel. The sedan landed on its top in the deep water of the gravel pit. There was a great splash. The car sank quickly.

I punched the hopper control button, cutting off the dust. I flew out over the gravel pit and hovered there, looking for a bobbing head but not seeing any. Just bubbles and some scum from the bottom.

Jockeying the helicopter back to the edge of the pit, I found a clear space and set it down. I cut the engine. The rotor wobbled and slowed and stopped. I was shaking and was wringing wet.

I got the .45 out, watching the spot where the sedan had gone in. Nothing moved out there. Back on the road, behind the trees, the truck driver was pounding down the hill, hollering out excitedly. From where I sat I couldn't see the yellow school bus over the hill. But I knew that Mrs. Proudy, the driver, was just about finished loading small fry, and that they'd all get to the district school on time and unharmed.

I wondered idly what the surprise was that Rusty had packed in the lunches my two kids were carrying.

Shaking like I was, I had trouble lighting a cigarette. But I managed. I settled down to wait for the cops to arrive. There'd be a lot of questions. A lot of answers. Sitting in the helicopter, hearing the sirens come barreling down the highway, I figured that when I got home I'd better unburden to Rusty. With the kids safe in school, I'd be able to talk long and quiet, like a man could who'd sweated out his last rumble. —By Frederic Sinclair

Read All About It...

BY JOHN T. DUNLAVY



WONDER DRUGS

WHAT ARE THE "wonder" drugs? Primarily, they are not the creations of practicing physicians or even of pure medical research. They have been mostly the brain children of chemists, the products of the science of chemotherapy. They include the sulfonamides (the sulfa drugs), most of which are synthesized chemically; the antibiotics, which are the natural products of molds and bacteria, isolated and cultured in labs; and the hormone drugs, which are produced by chemical synthesis.

HOW DO WONDER DRUGS work? Oddly enough, this has yet to be fully established. Unlike antiseptics, they are not directly bactericidal. Instead, they destroy germs indirectly. It is thought that both sulfa drugs and antibiotics literally starve bacteria to death by chemically depriving them of nourishment, each in a different way. Hormones such as Cortisone and ACTH, along with vitamins and enzymes, are not bacteria killers at all but are *bio-catalysts*—that is, they change the rate of chemical chain-reactions that are constantly occurring within the 26,500 *billion* cells in the body.

MOST IMPORTANT of the wonder drugs are antibiotics (from the Greek, meaning literally "against life"). Each of the millions of forms of bacterial life can produce a chemical substance—an antibiotic—which is its defense against its natural bacterial enemies. The problem is to find bacteria with enemies common to man which produce potent, yet non-toxic, defense chemicals which can be isolated and produced in volume. Upwards of 3500 different antibiotic substances have been isolated and studied since 1942; only about 15 have been found medically useful.

THE FIRST ANTIBIOTIC was penicillin, successfully used on patients in 1941 and still the least toxic and most widely used of all antibiotics. The second was streptomycin, which complements the effectiveness of penicillin. The other four major antibiotics are chloromycetin, tetracycline, aureomycin and terramycin. All discovered since 1947, these are known as "broad spectrum" drugs because each attacks a wide variety of infectious organisms. In all there are some 15 antibiotics in use which constitute a $650 million a year business at retail. Almost half the money now spent on prescriptions is for antibiotics, some of which are effective against some 100 infectious diseases.

ALTHOUGH SULFANILAMIDE had been known to chemists since 1908, it was thought for almost 30 years to be nothing more than a simple but useless chemical. Its chemotherapeutic properties were discovered accidentally in the hunt for better fabric dyes, and its medical introduction in 1936 marks the dawn of the wonder-drug age. Soon, new sulfas came along: sulfathiazole, sulfapyridine, sulfadiazine, sulfaguanidine and others. These could control bacteria by mysteriously counterfeiting the enzymes on which the bacteria fed. They actually starved bacteria by feeding them fake food. They were low in cost and easy to administer and in a few years sulfa drugs had become nearly a $100 million a year business at retail, with an annual output of some 3,000 tons—second only to aspirin in volume output. However, the sulfas have their limitations: they are relatively high in toxicity and effective against only a narrow range of important diseases.

CAN WONDER DRUGS hurt you? Yes. No drug has yet been developed which is completely non-toxic. Physicians and druggists frown on the popular expression "wonder" drugs, for the drugs can work their wonders only *when properly used*. They are neither so harmless that they can be sold without supervision nor so dangerous that scare stories are warranted. For your own protection, *never* use these new drugs without the advice of a doctor. The safest advice on what to do with old bottles: Throw them away.

DO WONDER DRUGS lose their punch? In a sense, yes. In the course of the tide of battle ever-present in nature, some bacteria have developed resistance to the various new drugs. It is thought that this can be traced to inadequate doses. If not enough of the drug is given to cause the death of all the bacteria, those that survive become drug resistant. This is true of sulfa and penicillin and particularly of streptomycin, while it is less a problem with broad spectrums. This is yet another argument against self-treatment. In treating minor infections, one may limit the effectiveness of the drug in a real emergency.

POTENCY? Penicillin, other antibiotics and vitamin B-12 are so potent that a full dose is almost invisible. Less than 300 tons of penicillin fill the current demands of the entire world! The total amount of penicillin required for the successful treatment of pneumonia, for example, is usually not more than 500,000 units. This is 1/18th of a gram, for the average potency of penicillin now being used is about nine million units per gram. A 30-millionth of an ounce of vitamin B-12 per day halts pernicious anemia.

USED AS A FEED supplement, antibiotics have created a near-revolution in poultry and livestock raising. A teaspoonful of the broad spectrum antibiotics in a ton of feed reduces growing time, amount of feed and mortality by 10%. Fifty cents worth of antibiotic in a hog's feed over the animal's lifetime saves $1.25 in feed costs. Universal use would save $24 million a year in feeding hogs; $22 million in raising chickens.

HOW DO WE STAND NOW? More than 500 microbiological agents with therapeutic properties and other chemotherapeutic drugs are being examined in current research, which results in a discovery about every six months. There is hope that through their use we may soon be able to cure some forms of mental disease; control virus diseases such as polio, influenza, sleeping sickness, and the common cold; slow down degenerative diseases including some forms of heart trouble; and perhaps even stop cancer. It may be possible to eliminate a good deal of surgery. New antibiotics, plasma volume expanders, synthetic hormone compounds and other new wonder drugs of chemotherapy will not only cure new diseases and give us better foods and better meats; they will make it possible to promote and maintain continual good health by warring on all the micro-organs that are enemies of man.



How Italy's Government Lets

YOUR CHILDREN STAND IN DANGER OF INCURABLE ADDICTION TO THE MOST TERRIBLE OF NARCOTICS—BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY REFUSES TO STOP ITS OPEN MANUFACTURE.

Editor's Note: The facts in the following article have been checked for accuracy by U. S. Narcotics Commissioner Harry J. Anslinger.

Dorothy came from a good home in a medium-sized Midwestern city. She could have been described as an average teenager when, at 16, she met a boy at a high-school dance who was carrying reefers. He explained he'd been given them "as a sample" by a well-dressed young man, known only as Andy, who'd recently started hanging around the high school. Dorothy and her new acquaintance went to a dark corner of the porch and, out of curiosity and with a delightful sense of daring, tried their first marijuana.

Unfortunately it was not their last. Soon she was "going steady" with the boy, and on each date he would bring along some reefers bought from Andy.

One night there was also cocaine—supplied by Andy. For several weeks Dorothy and her boy friend were on a reefer-and-cocaine kick. Then came an evening when, after they'd met Andy at the appointed rendezvous for the reefers and cocaine,

BY HENRY JORDAN



Heroin Flood U.S.

he had something else for them—another "free sample" he wanted them to try. It was heroin.

Not long thereafter Dorothy was taking three or four capsules of heroin a day. But it was expensive—three dollars a capsule. Her allowance wasn't nearly enough, so Dorothy began picking up money by prostitution. Sometimes she and her boy friend got their heroin money by panhandling in the streets. They'd say they'd lost their money and needed bus fare to get home.

Finally, requiring more and stronger "jolts," the two kids grew desperate. They broke into a home in their neighborhood and were caught by the police.

Dorothy was sent to a narcotics hospital. That was a year ago. It doesn't look as if Dorothy will be cured. Heroin addiction seldom is.

Which is why peddlers like Andy follow the free-sample technique. It gets them thousands of new teenage customers every year—and with heroin,



Wide World Photos

Ex-rackets czar Lucky Luciano, perhaps still a power in dope traffic, leaves Naples hearing at which authorities placed him under restrictions.

a customer is usually a customer for a lifetime.

The fact that teenagers are the main target is reflected in some shocking statistics. In a recent series of raids, Detroit police arrested 48 dope-peddlers who had been selling to high-school students. In Chicago, one out of every five addicts picked up is a minor. New York authorities estimate that there are today more than 5,000 teenage addicts in the city—about double the 1951 number. Such figures, while relatively small, indicate the trend.

Your son or daughter may, like Dorothy, become a heroin addict. If so, who'll be to blame?

The shocking, almost incredible answer, is: the government of Italy.

It was a New York City hit-and-run accident on the night of July 18, 1948, that set in motion the chain of events which established this ugly fact. A large man staggered across lower 11th Avenue directly into the path of a speeding car. The driver swerved, but a fender struck the man and threw him against the curb. His scalp was split open.

His papers showed him to be an American seaman whose ship had pulled into New York harbor only a few hours before. In Bellevue hospital, his condition was diagnosed as a superficial injury aggravated by shock and too much alcohol. But when, a few hours later, a convulsive twitching and writhing set in, the medical verdict was quickly changed from drunkenness to heroin poisoning.

As the possible source of a much-needed lead, the seaman was valuable property to Federal narcotics-squad men. The dope situation had become desperate. In preceding months, customs men in the Port of New York alone had turned up mammoth shipments of heroin: June 29, 1948, $500,000 worth in the tail of a Constellation inbound from Rome; three weeks prior, a million dollars' worth in the garbage pails of a freighter docking in Staten Island harbor; earlier that year, $900,000 worth behind a bulkhead of the Italian liner *Vulcania.* Customs men estimated that no more than five percent of the contraband was being detected. "We would have to tear a ship apart to find the stuff," one official commented gloomily. "The situation is out of control."

The only hope was to stop the flood at the source. But at that time both the source and the operators were unknown. The large seizures had given no clues as to who had dispatched the dope or who was to get it.

Now the sailor who had staggered into the path of a reckless driver looked good for a lead or two. Particularly when a search of his hotel room turned up five cellophane bags containing 20 ounces of 98 percent heroin. Cut with epsom salts or milk sugar the stuff would be good for about 40,000 "jolts," packaged in capsules retailing at $3 apiece.

Twelve hours after his accident, the seaman was beginning to scream for the needle. He would have been putty in anybody's hands. He talked.

He had bought the stuff, he told the narcotics officers, in a waterfront bar in Trieste, Italy. Which bar? He didn't remember. There were so many of them, all alike. But he recalled the salesman—a swarthy, scar-faced guy named Giuseppe. Giuseppe in Italian means Joe and is just as usual a name. But Trieste was a new name in the gazetteer of the international narcotics trade.

A picture-postcard port, Trieste was then under American-British administration—the last place you'd expect to export drugs. The two top men in the U.S. Criminal Investigation Department there, Major Harry Manfredi and Captain Edward Carbone, were both former Federal narcotics agents.

Italy is the only civilized nation which allows the manufacture of heroin.

On instructions from Washington, the two men got rolling. Their main target was the Trieste waterfront bars. Trouble was, the town has 11 miles of waterfront and no man has ever counted how many bars. The chase for the scar-faced "Giuseppe" filled up the city jail. But the riddle of the heroin source wasn't solved.

Heroin continued to arrive at American ports, ranging from Wilmington, California, to Boston, Massachusetts. In each case, the ships' itinerary had included Italian ports-of-call. The heroin was top-grade. The manufacture of such can never be a crude, moonshine operation. It's a job for chemical experts having at their disposal industrial facilities.

The dope was being made in Italian factories —that much was certain.

Trieste again jumped into the news in March, 1950, when Los Angeles narcotics police were lucky enough to grab that rare combination, an addict and big dealer. Like the sailor, the man spilled the beans. Somebody had once slipped him the word that a party named Ramsa, operating in Trieste, was the Big Boy.

It took Major Manfredi only a few hours to figure out this Ramsa. It was not a person but an it —R.A.M.S.A. The S.A. standing for *Società Anònima*—the equivalent of "Incorporated." R.A.M.S.A. was R.A.M., Inc.

This, it turned out, was a pharmaceutical supply house. A licensed pharmacist, Ricardo Morganti, and a non-practicing physician, Dr. Cesare Melli, made up the body corporate. Both men were of such excellent reputation in the Trieste business world that they were practically untouchable. At least, they were so long as there was no evidence against them other than a tip gasped out by a sweating junkie 7000 miles away.

But a tip is a tip, and a drug firm the place to get high-grade heroin. Major Manfredi thought enough of the lead to ask Washington to give him a leg up.

In answer to the request, two bright young men from the Federal Narcotics Bureau went from Washington to Trieste. Dressed in the casual togs of American seamen, they checked into a cheap hotel. Flashing hefty rolls in the harbor saloons, they dropped hints of being in the market for some of that white stuff. And they were in a hurry.

For the sake of a couple of customers with plenty of money but little time, the dope-peddlers were apparently ready to take chances. A scar-faced swarthy character named Giuseppe contacted the undercover men at the Roma Bar. He promised, hedged, fenced, and promised again—then finally produced a few heroin samples. The agents said they didn't want samples, they wanted pounds, and put the right accent on their request by waving their cash.

"For a big deal like that you must see The Boss in person," Giuseppe informed them at last.

Two nights later, a car picked them up at a dark street-corner and rushed them to a gleaming-white mansion. There they met The Boss, a distinguished-looking, elderly man. Just as money and two pounds of heroin were changing hands, C.I.D. men barged in.

The Boss turned out to be none other than the ex-physician and R.A.M.S.A. associate, Dr. Cesare Melli. From an adjoining room, the officers hauled Ricardo Morganti, the other half of the corporation.

These two pillars of civic respectability proved cooperative—up to a point. They had been getting their heroin supplies from several Italian pharmaceutical manufacturers, particularly Schiapparelli, in Turin (not to be confused with Schiaparelli, the perfume and clothes maker). But while the manufacture and medical use of heroin in Italy are legal, they are under the strictest ban in the Allied-ruled Trieste territory. So the R.A.M.S.A. group used smugglers to bring the stuff in and a front man to buy it for them. He was a Dr. Leo Baccarani, a bona fide physician, living in the North Italian city of Modena. In the last three years Dr. Baccarani had purchased the staggering amount of 450

Entrance to the Schiapparelli chemical works in Turin, Italy. This plant has been one of the major producers of heroin. Note Communist posters.



pounds of heroin from the Schiapparelli works alone.

And there, in a nutshell, is the whole trouble: anybody who hangs out a physician's or druggist's shingle in Italy can buy heroin as easily as aspirin, with the government's full permission.

Yet heroin is poison. It is of no industrial use. It can't cure any illness. As a pain-killer it is totally inferior to other drugs—morphine, for instance. But even if it did have beneficial effects, its use would be impossible because it is so terrifyingly habit-forming. Its chemical action on the human body is so violent that with some people—as the racketeers well know—the one-time use of heroin can set off an incurable, lifelong craving.

Against the medical opinion of nearly the entire world, Italy's High Commissariat for Hygiene and Public Health keeps insisting that the Italian medical profession can't do without heroin. Doctors, he claims, like to prescribe it in cough medicines and for the treatment of tuberculosis—laughable if it weren't so terrible.

How much heroin does Italy say she needs for her cough and T.B. nostrums? The U.N. Opium Board gives us the answer: 15 pounds a year. How much is the country's total heroin production? Over a 10-year period, about 350 pounds a year. At least that is the figure given by the Italian authorities to the Opium Board. What happens to the balance of 335 pounds of heroin a year? Says an Opium Board bulletin: "It finds its way into illicit channels."

The R.A.M.S.A. affair was likely to worry American public opinion. Sensitive to the possible repercussions, on October 9, 1950, Rome ordered the arrest of Dr. Baccarani, the go-between. The charges against him were vague: "He committed actions of a criminal nature," a police report stated.

The Italian government also displayed considerable zeal when making out its end-of-year report to the Opium Board. Referring to the R.A.M.S.A. affair, the official statement said:

"Dr. Baccarani engaged in extensive narcotic deals for his own personal interest and had woven a network of illegal intrigues and fraudulent speculations. It is obvious that such activity could not have been carried on without the assistance of other persons. Investigations of people involved are continuing."

Unfortunately, the Italian police were less successful than the men from Washington. Dr. Baccarani's mysterious accomplices were never found. The manufacturers, being entirely within the law, were never brought into the case. So the dope continued to be ground out by Schiapparelli and a score of others.

The Opium Board carries no big stick. All it may do is hint, nudge and write polite letters. But as cooperation with the Board is voluntary, embarrassing questions don't have to be answered.

Observed the rarely outspoken London *Times*: "It is a conservative guess to say that Italian heroin stocks total about ten times the official admitted quantity." The *Times* went on to say, "Italy appears to be the world's largest supplier of narcotic drugs. Italian chemical plants can easily obtain licenses for the production of heroin, allegedly destined for medical use. Very large amounts of this drug are diverted to illegal channels."

Nothing has changed since this *Times* article was published nearly four years ago, on September 19, 1951.

Why? Who pulls the political strings in Italy?

The story of Italy's criminal delinquency in the matter of drugs goes back to the early days of Mussolini. Among his financial backers were the chemical trusts, particularly Montecatini. After coming to power Mussolini repaid his debts to the trusts by refusing to place effective controls on their manufacture of narcotics.

In the post-Mussolini era, the chemical trusts have managed to hang on to their old freedoms. A succession of friendly—that is, bribed—health commissioners have seen to it that no more than lip service has been paid to the cause of the anti-drug fight.

The constant pressure of the chemical trusts is quiet and does not find public expression. But the Italian medical and druggist associations squawk loudly in their trade papers and in releases to the newspapers every time the prospect arises of a partial or total drug shutdown.

Thus, heroin is being produced and exported by Italy in enormous amounts—for the moral and physical ruin of American kids. This through the combined efforts of three Italian pressure groups: the chemical manufacturers, the druggists, and the medical profession. These pressure groups have enough power and money to influence men in key government positions.

In Washington, Federal Narcotics Commissioner Harry J. Anslinger, an admirable man who has made the fight against drugs the passion of his life, continues to warn that things have gotten out of hand. With less than 200 agents to work with, Anslinger once estimated that his department seizes only 10 percent of the drugs which are sold in America's back alleys—where all the drug routes seem to lead.

There is a reason why the traffic runs in one

Some of the concerns which produce heroin have received U.S. dollars via the Marshall Plan.



Wide World Photos

U.S. Narcotics Commissioner Henry J. Anslinger testifying before a Congressional committee as to the increasingly desperate dope situation.

direction only. The European dope-makers and peddlers stand to gain little profit selling their hideous wares to their own impoverished countrymen. Such wobbly currencies as lire and francs, undersold in black markets everywhere, can buy little else than shoddy domestic goods. But the dollar isn't wobbly. It's in world-wide demand. It buys powerful cars, diamonds for trollops, luxury cruises, and fat investments abroad. Which is the reason why all the dope gets shoved onto the American market.

Who runs this vicious trade?

Some observers were surprised when, without offering any evidence, Senator Kefauver said that the master mind of the international heroin racket, operating from Italy, is Charles (Lucky) Luciano—the ex-New Yorker who, after making his terrible mark in America as a top mobster in the fields of bootlegging, gambling, and organized prostitution, served nine years of a 20-year sentence in Sing Sing and then was pardoned by Governor Tom Dewey and deported to his native Italy in 1946.

Senator Kefauver is not alone in being unable to prove his charges against Luciano. An investigation by the New York State legislature into the dope menace also was unable to pin the blame on Luciano. Former N.Y. Attorney General Nathaniel Goldstein, who had headed the probe, stated in answer to a newspaper man's question: "Luciano is not involved as far as we are able to find out."

Another authority who has done his best to trap Lucky and failed is Dr. Giuseppi Dosi, ex-police commissioner of Rome and one of the leading figures in the International Criminal Police Commission—or Interpol.

"We've been watching Luciano from the day he got to Italy in 1946," says Dr. Dosi. "And I mean watching. We've been trying to trap him by offering him trumped-up dope deals through undercover men or old racket contacts of his—nothing doing. He won't nibble. I am convinced that he's out of the rackets."

Commissioner Anslinger and the U. S. Federal Narcotics Bureau are not so convinced. They feel certain that Luciano has been playing a role in the traffic. He appeared in Palermo the day after agents had discovered a ring which was shipping heroin out of Italy in the walls of trunks. The Bureau has reason to believe that Luciano has been a buyer of acid acetic, used in the manufacture of heroin. Such things, while not constituting enough proof for the Bureau to take action, are considered sufficient basis for at least strong suspicion. Anslinger holds that Luciano still has valuable underworld contacts in the U. S. and would be an asset to the heroin rings for that reason alone, if for no other.

However, some crime observers disagree with the Commissioner on that last point. According to them, one thing that has kept the present-day dope



International News Photos

Eleven pounds of heroin valued at $1,100,000 was found on French liner *Flandre* in October 1953. Here James Ryan *(left)* of narcotics bureau and customs agent James Page show how it was concealed in fire extinguishers.

mob out of the spotlight is their not doing business with the old crowd. Luciano is too hot—he'd be a dead giveaway. And what could he offer? The tattered remnants of his bootleg and gambling legions? They'd be no asset—they're too well-known to the police.

Thus the extent of Luciano's influence is debated. For a close look at this legendary mobster,



International News Photos

A group of suspected narcotics peddlers and addicts seized in recent raid by police in New York City.

the writer recently spent two days roaming Naples with him. Luciano's hair is getting gray—he's pushing 60. There is that scar under his chin, acquired in the 20's when an enraged New York cop slit Lucky's throat for seducing his daughter. The eyelids droop more heavily now than in younger years. But the eyes, despite glasses, still have the old murderous sharpness.

These days his mood is black. Aging, hating his exile, he will burst into tears at mention of Manhattan. Recently, at the request of the U. S. Narcotics Bureau, Italian authorities have decreed that Luciano must for the next two years stay indoors between dusk and dawn; must not travel farther than the suburbs of Naples; must avoid race-tracks, café, and places where liquor is sold; must report to the police every Sunday and produce proof that he is engaged in useful full-time work.

The last he finds bothersome. As his occupation he lists the management of his brother's properties. At this writing, the police are checking on the brother.

Legitimate businesses Luciano invested in flopped. A spaghetti factory in Sicily, a pastry shop and a pair of night clubs in Rome—they all failed. Lately he's built an apartment house in Naples. It's the only one in the city that offers American comforts. Most of the tenants are Americans—U. S. Army officers stationed in the area. An exception to the rule, Luciano's real-estate venture is a success.

When asked where his capital comes from, he always answers, "I got friends back in the States. They stake me."

Another explanation you hear is that he is being paid by jittery politicians for not exposing them in the memoirs he has been threatening to write for years. A third guess is that the money may actually be his. The ex-king of a crime empire could have put a little something in a sock.

Whatever the answer to the Luciano mystery, the dope keeps flowing. It seems to make no difference whether the heat is off or on. The dope comes in from Italy direct, or via France, by plane, cruise ship, tramp boat, or passenger liner. Customs men find it in hatbands, neckties, seams of clothing, fountain pens, watches, cosmetic jars, radio sets, fire extinguishers, water coolers. More and more frequently it is arriving simply taped to seamen's bodies in small packs.

Even if you accept Commissioner Anslinger's perhaps rosy-hued estimate that 10 percent of the U.S.-marketed heroin is seized, then in 1950-54 2,500 pounds were peddled without a hitch and addicts paid a staggering $250 million for it. This happened despite penalties being drastically raised to 10 and 15 years' imprisonment for trafficking, sharper customs supervision, and the increased pressure which Washington and the Opium Board put on Italy to outlaw heroin production.

At a Senate hearing in June 1952, Senator Alexander Wiley was listening to an exposé of the drug situation by Federal Narcotics Agent Charles Siragusa. It was news to the Senator that while heroin was banned nearly everywhere, Italian plants were still permitted to grind it out.

"We must persuade Italy," said the Senator, "to pass laws providing severe penalties against Italian exporters of heroin. We have spent billions of dollars to revive that country economically. Now she ought to cooperate with us on this point." It was a pity that no one in the Senate committee room

asked if some of those heroin factories had been given U. S. aid via the Marshall Plan. The sad fact is, they had.

Almost coinciding with that Senate hearing, the Italian government suddenly announced a yearly reduction of its heroin output from 350 to 110 pounds "till old stocks are used up." But this was hardly more than window-dressing. As the Opium Board was quick to point out, Italian manufacturers had lately taken to the habit of mislabeling heroin as codeine. Both are opium derivatives but codeine is a useful pain-killer. And as Commissioner Anslinger revealed a few months later, "Italian heroin producers are going underground." In other words, despite official warnings the situation stayed pretty much what it had been before.

The cutback was received with expected ill humor by Italy's physicians and druggists. One only had to read their journals to see how violent their reaction was. Since the permitted amount of 110 pounds of heroin a year was still 10 times as much as the 15 pounds they claim is needed for medical purposes, the excitement of the druggists and doctors was hard to understand—unless you allow that some of them have a stake in the illicit traffic. A hint of this was contained in a dispatch to the New York *Herald Tribune*, datelined Rome, December 16, 1952. The news story read in part:

"The Italian government is still fighting shy of a permanent ban on heroin. The High Commissariat for Hygiene and Public Health today tossed along to the Permanent Pharmaceutical Commission the tough problem whether to go on limiting the production of this narcotic. Italian pharmacists and phycisians are known to be opposing the measures. The medical profession wields great influence over government officials."

By the time influence and the Pharmaceutical Commission had done their stuff, the 110-pound ceiling was lifted again.

This writer went to see the official responsible for the licensing of heroin manufacture. He is, ironically, Italy's High Commissioner for Hygiene and Public Health, Signor Giovanni Migliori. The Commissioner's office at the Ministry of the Interior happens to be only a few doors from that of Dr. Dosi's, the Interpol official. But the views of the two men are far apart.

"The chief culprits are all sorts of people," Migliori said. "They have formed an international dope cartel known as the 'Mole Club'—*Club Della Talpa*—which has 200 members in Italy alone." But not all are mobsters. "Some members," the High Commissioner went on, "disguise their drug dealings behind a political front. Others hold top positions in the business world."

Asked whether the answer wouldn't be to cut narcotics production to the bone, Signor Migliori shook his head and said:

"That wouldn't help much. Certain of our important pharmaceutical manufacturers are being forced into partnership with the Mole Club people by economic blackmail."

Signor Migliori stated that to disclose more about this would hamper the police in coping with the conspiracy. But he admitted that the squeeze roughly consists in the pharmaceutical wholesalers threatening to boycott manufacturers who refuse to supply them with heroin.

Isn't it a sign of a serious breakdown of law enforcement to have allowed this criminal plot to take root and spread?

The Health Commissioner thought not. The police should not be blamed. "They have smashed numerous small rings in the past and are trying their best to find the real backers and principals of the dope trade. Unfortunately, they have always managed to stay in the dark. Somewhere along the line we always come up against a missing link which has kept us from striking at the nerve centers of the organization. Its master minds conceal their identities behind respectable commercial fronts. These people take care not to expose themselves, keeping in touch with their underlings through long, almost untraceable pipelines."

Signor Migliori hinted at a development which regrettably has so far not come to pass. "We are nearly ready to go after one of the principal ringleaders, a top-notch international businessman in Milan who, also, is hiding behind a good reputation."

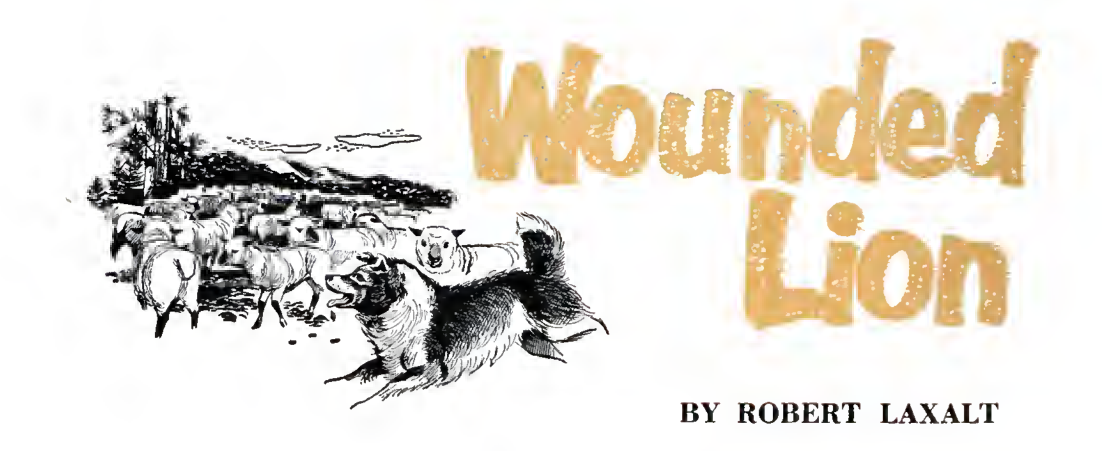
Toward the end of the interview Italy's Health Commissioner made a statement likely to bowl over the Federal Narcotics Bureau, the members of New York's 107th Street dope squad, and the Un-American Activities Committee. Said Migliori: "The narcotics distribution in the United States is in the hands of American Communist Party leaders."

Glancing at his wrist watch, Migliori discovered he couldn't spare the time to explain how the dope flows through red channels. At any rate, it hasn't stopped flowing from Italian plants, cutback or no.

As Signor Migliori suggested, the top men in dopeland don't resemble the gang lords of bygone days. They don't swagger. They don't flaunt their molls. They do without escorts of dark-coated goons with bulges under their armpits. They are, as Signor Migliori told us, highly respected. They

. . . *Continued on page 81*

"A really tough ultimatum from Washington could stop the whole sickening business."



Wounded Lion

BY ROBERT LAXALT

Into the darkness they went, following a trail of blood. They knew it was madness to stalk the mountain lion at night, but they had no choice.

THE DOG stood motionless on the grassy knoll, hackles raised and shoulders hulked forward. Overhead, the moon scudded behind a cloud. A somber gloom settled over the high plateau.

Below the knoll, in the soft sand that was the bed ground, the sheep had wakened. Singly and in groups, they rose and faced as one to the side where the plateau sloped into the midnight cavern of the forest. The lambs slept on.

On the high knoll, the dog hesitated, forelegs quivering. Then he turned and trotted stiff-legged down the slope to the darkened camp. At the entrance to the tent, he stopped and looked back toward the bed ground. As he lifted his nose to the night breeze, his hackles bristled again, and a growl was born in his chest.

But the growl died in a whimper, and the dog slunk through the open flap of the tent. As he passed the canvas bed on the pine boughs, a shaggy haunch brushed the sleeping face of Jean Baptiste. The herder sniffed and sputtered to drowsy wakefulness. A head crested with a tousled mass of hair appeared above the blankets.

"*Ekhen hadi hortic!* Get out of here, dog!" But the dog only whimpered from the far dark corner of the tent.

The herder raised himself in the bed and blinked in disbelief. But the curse on his lips was stilled by the sudden rumble of hoofs, and the lone, agonized bleat from the night outside.

Illustrated by Elliot Means

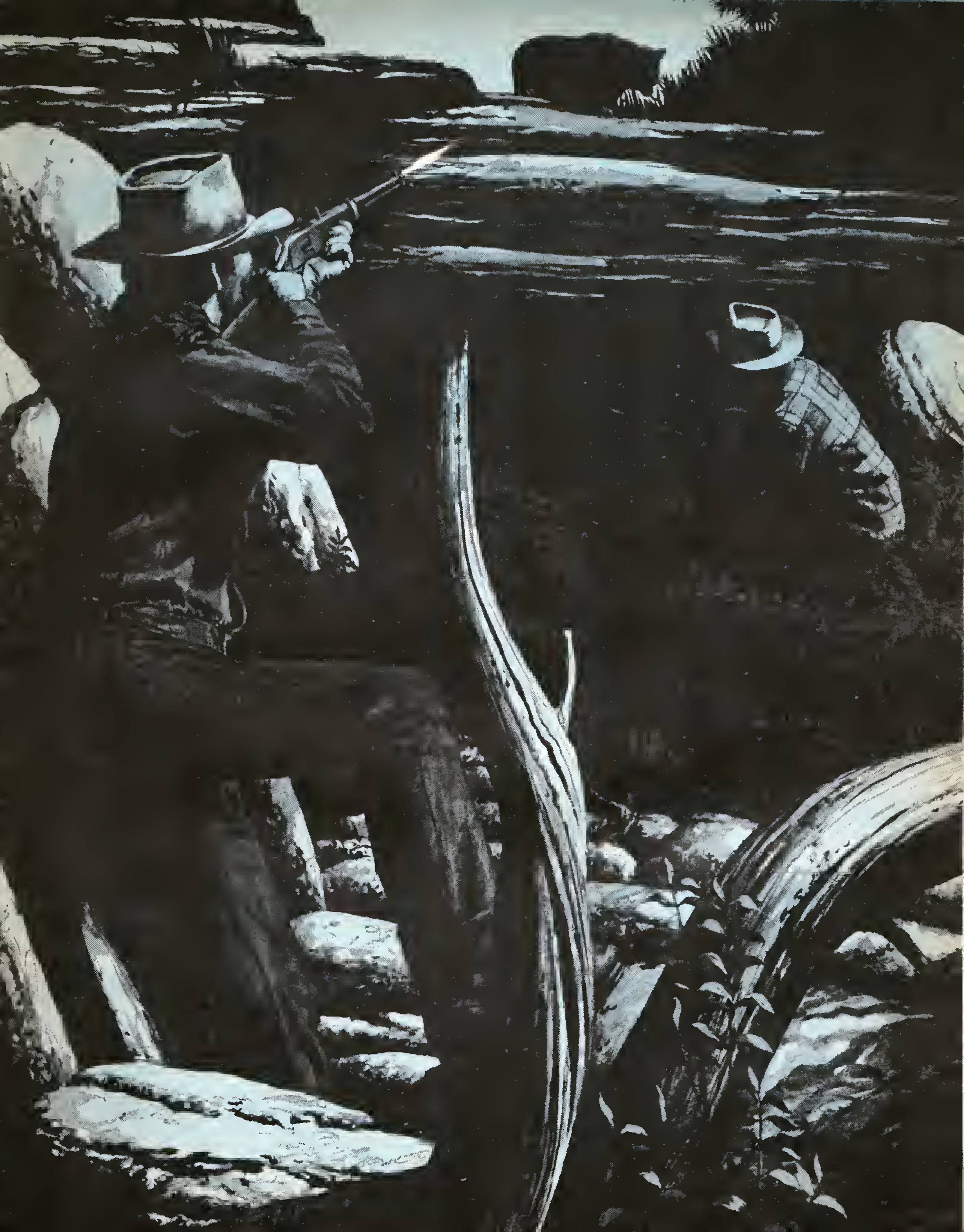
"*Mon Dieu,* the *liona!*" the herder gasped out in a mixture of French and Basque as he fought to disentangle himself from the blankets. Leaping from the bed, he jerked on his boots and overalls, groped blindly for the carbine and lantern, and burst out of the tent at a dead run.

He hauled up short when he saw the sheep bowling down from the bed ground directly toward the camp. Bracing his legs, he fought to keep his balance in the sea of jolting forms that swept past him. Then, when the wave had passed, the herder pounded up the slope and onto the sand flat, levering a cartridge into the chamber of the carbine as he ran. A sideward glance showed him the ewes who had been too frightened to run, and he plowed through the sand in the direction toward which they faced, to the side where the bed ground planed off into the pines.

Above him, the moon sidled slowly from behind the cloud, and the plateau was bathed again in pale light. The herder came to a halt at the crest of the ridge, where the deep shadows began, and listened; but there was only the sound of his own heavy breathing in his ears. The sheep had stopped their stampede. The mountain lion was gone.

The herder knelt in the sand and fumbled for a match. Cupping the flickering flame in one broad hand, he touched it to the wick of the kerosene lantern. Then, with the lantern raised high, he searched through the manzanita clumps and the trees for what he knew he would find.

The light caught and held on a mottled pool of brilliance below a small boulder covered with



manzanita. The herder held the lantern forward, and there, behind the boulder and the manzanita, where they had lain to sleep, were the lambs.

The herder stood above them, playing the lantern on the mutilated forms. The heads of two were twisted back, at odds with the line of their bodies, their throats bloody and ravaged. The head of the third lamb had been ripped away. Its underside was a dark gouge.

"Debria liona! Devil lion!" he choked out. "The time will come . . ." The words trailed off, and the herder's shoulders slumped. He heaved a sigh, then knelt to strip the pelts from the lambs.

Dawn had faded away the stars to the east when he finished. The great pines were taking shape in the cold, gray light, and the Sierra was locked in stillness as the things of the forest awaited the birth of the new day. A coyote yipped in the far distance, and the spell was broken. The herder rose and walked back across the bed ground. A ewe called as he passed with the pelt of her lamb.

The herder laid the pelts carefully across the tent rope, the wet linings toward the rising sun. Then he turned and stared down the canyon from which his boss, Laxague, would come. It was the fifth day, the day for supplies, and Laxague would be at the plateau by midday. The thought of what he would have to tell the man twisted Jean Baptiste's lips into a bitter grimace.

THE two men sat cross-legged beside the small, worn square of canvas on which the noon meal was spread. The sun was high overhead; and near the plateau, the sheep dozed beneath the pines.

Jean Baptiste looked up from his plate and saw Laxague's eyes travel again to the pelts, saw the hard lines of anger return to his leathery face. Jean Baptiste reached quickly for the Dutch oven.

"More *omeletta,* Laxague?" he asked.

Laxague ignored the offering. "You did not see him at all?" he asked, and the question was tinged faintly with accusation.

Jean Baptiste returned the Dutch oven to the curved iron that bridged the fire-pit. "No, he was gone when I reached the slope."

"What of Barbo?" Laxague persisted. "Did he not bark?"

"Yes, but it was too late," the herder lied. He knew Laxague wouldn't understand that Barbo was afraid, that the memory of his only meeting with the cougar was burned as deeply as the wound that had laid his shoulder open to the bone. The dog had been saved only by the sound of the herder's approach.

Laxague's eyes were fixed on the dog. "There have been too many times he has barked late," he said. "I cannot understand it."

"The *liona* is cunning, Laxague," the herder said defensively. "It was a full week before I myself knew that he was trailing the herd."

Jean Baptiste remembered the day he had first come across the lion's tracks in the sagebrush foothills while searching for some missing lambs. His own broad hand could not cover the lion's print. Since then the lion had trailed the sheep relentlessly, had become that dreaded thing of the mountains —a herd-stalker.

Laxague had returned his attention to his plate. With a thick piece of crust, he scooped up the remainder of the *omeletta.*

"Batista," he said finally, "I must do something. The way it is going, I'll be lucky if there are enough lambs left to pay for your summer wage. It is a terrible thing."

"Perhaps the *liona* will leave the herd," Jean Baptiste said hopefully.

"Bah! There is no chance now," Laxague said bitterly. "He has tasted the blood of the spring lamb. He will stay with us through the whole summer range."

"Can you not find a man with dogs?" Jean Baptiste asked.

"Yes, this week I have heard of one. But he is very expensive. It will cost much. And if he does not find the lion, I will be all the poorer. It is too much of a risk."

Laxague leaned forward and sliced a piece of crust from the sourdough loaf. He lifted it to his mouth and suddenly stopped short, the bread only inches from his lips. He seemed to be trying to remember something.

"Is this the plateau where the wind blows always through the hollow?" he asked, and the hand with the bread was lowered again to the plate.

"Yes," Jean Baptiste answered, gesturing with his hand to the west end of the plateau. "The hollow lies there."

Laxague brought his hand against his knee in a resounding slap. "Batista," he said, "we will make a trap! We will stake out a lamb in the brush at the bottom of the hollow, and we will hide above, at the head, where the wind will be always in our faces."

Jean Baptiste interrupted, "But what if the lion chooses to visit the herd instead?"

Laxague's face was triumphant. "We will place lanterns around the herd. I have two in the saddlebags. You have two also, I know. There will be enough kerosene to last the night."

Jean Baptiste accepted the news silently. He had heard of such traps, but most of them had proved unsuccessful. And yet, there was a chance.

AT dusk, the two men walked out onto the grassy plateau. Jean Baptiste lifted a curved finger to his mouth and whistled. At the piercing blast, Barbo shot like a furry bolt down the side of the plateau and into the trees. A succession of frantic scurries followed upon the heels of his furious barking, and soon the whole herd was moving toward

the bed ground. The Jenny was in the lead, her long ears cocked backward in the direction of the dog, and her bell clanging in rhythm with her measured gait.

Jean Baptiste threaded his way into the herd and snared a lean lamb, one that he was certain would not do well. He heaved the kicking form to his shoulder and walked toward the hollow.

Descending carefully to the bottom, he found a stout bush, and tied the lamb to it by a foreleg. Rising, he stood and watched as the lamb struggled to its feet and stared at him bewilderedly. And with the thought that this lamb might also die, fury returned to him. There was a score to settle, for the lambs, for Barbo, for Laxague.

The herder turned and surveyed the upper banks of the hollow, marking the many places of concealment in the boulders that flanked one side, and in the twisted, jumbled mass of manzanita that covered the other. Behind him, the hollow dipped like the handle of a spoon and emptied downward into the forest. Jean Baptiste nodded to himself. It was as though the hollow had been made to order. He mounted the upper bank and walked swiftly across the plateau, noticing the flickering lights of the lanterns in a circle around the bed ground.

Laxague was waiting for him at the tent. He was bundled in a wool-lined jacket, and the metal of his saddle rifle gleamed dully in the fading light. Jean Baptiste lifted his jumper from the bed, checked the load in his carbine, and knelt to rummage through the kyack for the cartridge box. Then, ordering Barbo to remain at the camp, he strode hurriedly after Laxague's retreating figure.

They walked wordlessly to the head of the hollow. Laxague spoke first. "I will hide on the left side, in the manzanita, and you will take the right side, in the rocks."

Jean Baptiste nodded and moved away, but Laxague halted him with a parting word.

"Batista," he said, "do not become impatient. We will wait the night if it is necessary. And Batista, do not shoot unless you are certain."

Jean Baptiste nodded again and picked his way through the boulders that lined the right side of the hollow. The night was already becoming chilly, and he buttoned the front of his jumper.

Behind two boulders that came together so closely that only a small crevice appeared between them, he found a patch of sand and eased himself down. Thrusting the carbine through the crevice, he hunched forward to scan the hollow. The lamb was a patch of gray-white against the dark background of the salt grass and the brush clump. It had ceased to tug at the rope, but its outraged bleats still pierced through the night air.

Jean Baptiste turned his gaze to the left bank of the hollow, where Laxague lay hidden, but the moon was down and he could detect no movement in the mass of blackness that was the manzanita.

Pulling his knees up, he hunkered down into the threadbare warmth of the jumper, marking time by the occasional bleating of the lamb. The night breeze blew in chilling gusts up the hollow and whistled mournfully through the crevice. The heat of the day left the sand on which the herder lay, and the cold penetrated through the thin denim of his clothes. Tucking his hands under his armpits, Jean Baptiste listened as the muffled and lonely bleating of the lamb grew fainter and fainter, and finally faded away.

Jean Baptiste awoke with a grunt, wondering sleepily if he had rolled from his bed. He twisted and felt the crunch of sand beneath him, and knew suddenly that he was in the hollow, that he had fallen asleep. Turning his head, he looked at the sky. The moon was high overhead, and the herder knew he had slept a long time. He turned quickly, peered through the cleft, and breathed in relief when he saw that the hollow was quiet. In the moonlight he could see the lamb clearly.

The night had become bitter cold, and Jean Baptiste worked his numbed legs up and down. His hand recoiled from the cold metal of the carbine, and he wished desperately for the coming of daylight. He was thrusting his hands inside the lining of the jumper when an alarmed bleat from the hollow jerked him to sudden attentiveness.

Grasping the carbine, he hunched forward and

peered through the crevice. The lamb was jerking wildly at the end of the rope, and its shrill bleats were shattering the silence of the night. Then suddenly it fell quiet and stood as if transfixed, staring into the black mass of brush behind the clump to which it was tied.

A twig snapped behind Jean Baptiste, and a cold fear washed through his body. He turned slowly, the hair rising at the nape of his neck. But all was quiet in the pines beyond, and he turned again to the hollow.

Straining forward, he swept the black mass of brush with his gaze, striving to make out what the lamb had seen or scented. Dimly at first, then clearer, a dark outline took shape before his eyes. He eased the carbine to his shoulder and searched for the front sight. It swung into line, and his finger tightened on the trigger. Then he remembered Laxague's words, and he eased the pressure, waiting for the dark hulk to move. But it remained maddeningly immobile, and Jean Baptiste lowered the carbine slightly.

As he did so, a gray thing flashed into his vision and closed with the lamb. But it had come from the wrong direction, from the head of the hollow. Cursing aloud, Jean Baptiste rose to one knee and trained his carbine on the swirling heap. For he could see that the thing that had jumped the lamb was a coyote.

The heavy boom of the carbine rocked the hollow with sound, and the swirling stopped. Jean Baptiste rose to his feet and saw Laxague twisting through the manzanita toward the lamb. Levering the empty cartridge from the chamber, Jean Baptiste made ready to clamber over the boulders. It was then he heard Laxague's outcry and looked up.

Poised on the lip of the hollow was the ominous silhouette of the lion. It *had* been in the brush patch. Jean Baptiste's eyes had not deceived him.

Snapping the carbine to his shoulder in a lightning motion, he fired blindly as the lion gathered itself for a leap. Below the roar of the shot, Jean Baptiste heard the bullet hit, heard the lion's scream of rage and pain, and saw the beast collapse on the lip of the hollow.

"He is hit! He is hit!" Laxague shouted as he scrambled through the bitter brush toward the lion.

"Laxague, look out! Look out!" Jean Baptiste yelled as he saw the lion regain its feet and turn back toward the hollow, snarling furiously at the approaching figure.

Jamming the lever down, Jean Baptiste again whipped the gun to his shoulder and fired.

The lion rose on its hind legs, screaming and clawing the air as the second bullet struck. Then it wheeled away and bounded into the darkness.

Jean Baptiste hurdled the boulders and fought his way through the brush to the lip where the lion had fallen, where Laxague now knelt.

"Man, you were lucky," he gasped out, but Laxague did not hear. He was on his knees in the grass, groping for a match. The light flared in his cupped hands and both of them saw the splashes of blood on the grass.

Laxague rose to his feet. "He is hurt bad," he said. "We will follow him."

"No, Laxague," Jean Baptiste argued. "Let us wait until daylight. It is only a little while. Now, in the darkness, it will be too dangerous."

Laxague's voice rose in sudden anger. "No, we will follow him now. By daylight, the wounds will heal enough so that there will be no blood to follow him by. Fetch a lantern from the bed ground."

Jean Baptiste saw that it was useless to argue. The man's reason had been blotted out by his determination to kill the lion. Jean Baptiste shrugged and made his way through the brush where the lamb had been tied. The coyote was twisting soundlessly in its death agony, and the lamb lay huddled on its side. Jean Baptiste rose and climbed swiftly out of the hollow and across the plateau. Near the camp, Barbo met him, whining with fear. Jean Baptiste ordered him back to the tent and picked up a lantern. Swishing it back and forth, he made certain that there was enough kerosene to last until daylight, then made his way back to the hollow.

Laxague heard his approach and called, "Hurry, Batista! It will be too late."

Jean Baptiste mounted to the lip and held the lantern near the ground. For the first time they could judge the extent of the lion's wounds. Great gobs of blood were splashed in a large circle on the salt grass.

The two men descended slowly down the outer

Native Wit...

For many years an oil-drilling company in the West employed a Chinese cook, and one evening after an unusually good dinner the superintendent decided to raise his wages. The next payday the cook noted the extra money in his envelope.

"Why you pay me more?" he asked.

"Because you have been such a good cook all these years," replied the boss.

The Chinese thought it over, then said, "You been cheating me long time, yes?"

—Walter J. Bartozek
Chicago, Ill.

Bluebook will pay $25 for each story of "Native Wit" that is published. Each must be original and none can be acknowledged or returned.

side of the hollow. Where the lion's first leap ended, they found another great splash of blood. From this, a reddened trail led into the blackness of the forest.

At the edge of the trees, Jean Baptiste halted. Laxague hauled up short and demanded. "What is the matter? Why do you stop?"

"Laxague, I tell you the lion may be waiting for us, perhaps in these trees, perhaps behind a rock or a manzanita bush. It is foolish for both of us to walk along with our heads bent to the trail. One must follow behind and guard the other."

"All right, all right. Give the lantern to me," Laxague said impatiently. "I will follow the trail."

WITH an apprehensive glance toward the tall pines, Jean Baptiste fell in behind Laxague. They entered into the silent darkness of the forest, Laxague leading, his lantern held low to pick up the shiny flecks of blood on the pine needles. Jean Baptiste followed closely behind, his gaze sweeping the circle of light made by the lantern and probing into the darkness beyond. Long minutes had elapsed before he remembered suddenly that the carbine was nearly empty. He fished quickly into the jumper pocket and slipped the cartridges one by one through the loading slot. When the gun was fully loaded, he breathed a sigh of relief.

"He is growing weak, Batista," Laxague whispered hoarsely. "He is slowing up. There is more blood on the needles."

Jean Baptiste did not answer. Directly in the path before them was a low, black shape, barely distinguishable in the outer reaches of the lantern light. Jean Baptiste reached forward quickly and caught Laxague by the skirt of his jacket.

"Laxague, stop!" he called out in a low, strained voice.

"What did you see? Why did you pull me?" Laxague demanded. "Do you jump at every sound?"

"I am sorry, Laxague," Jean Baptiste whispered. "I thought it was something. It—it is a log."

"Bah!" Laxague spat out. Swinging the lantern back and forth until he had picked up the trail, he moved forward swiftly.

Soon, they were on open ground. The trail was a mottled ribbon in the moonlight, skirting the side of the bare hill. Jean Baptiste looked toward the eastern sky and saw the first gray hint of light outlining the peaks.

Laxague quickened his pace on the bare ground, and presently the two men were shuffling through the sand at a near-trot. They topped the bare hill and descended the other side, past the ghostly whiteness of the summer snowbank that lay in the gully. The lion had rested in the snow, and the imprint of his body was lined with red.

From the gully, the trail followed the crest of a high ridge. Laxague whispered excitedly, "Batista, the trail is staggering. It will not be long now."



Jean Baptiste nodded silently. His eyes roved unceasingly from side to side. The men fought their way slowly through a manzanita thicket until finally the ridge emptied into the face of the shale mountain. It was a mountain that Jean Baptiste feared. Great sheets of tiny, jagged shale rock covered the nearly perpendicular face, seeming to cling miraculously to the mountain itself. Midway across the face, a boulder formation reared uncertainly, as if overpowered by the ominous magnificence of the mountain itself.

JEAN BAPTISTE had stood many times where he stood now, shooing adventurous lambs from the threadlike deer trail that crossed the shale face. Once he had arrived too late and had watched helplessly as two lambs ventured out upon the trail; they had attempted to turn around; one had bumped the other, and a slide had started. And as Jean Baptiste looked on, the roaring sheet of shale had carried the lambs to the bottom of the hill. When the dust had cleared, the lambs had disappeared from sight, buried in the shale. Now, Jean Baptiste objected vigorously as Laxague moved forward toward the precipitous mountainside. The thin ribbon of blood entered into the opening of the trail.

"Laxague," the herder said sharply, "we cannot cross the mountain. We are not deer."

Laxague's voice was even and cold, filled with a deadly determination. "I am too close now to give up," he said. "The lion has crossed the mountain, and so shall I. Come if you wish. If you do not, remain here." Then he turned his back and stepped into the trail.

Jean Baptiste raged inwardly. He had meant to suggest that they cross over the top of the mountain and come back from the other side, picking up the lion's track where the trail across the shale face ended. It was not a question of courage, but common sense. But Laxague was without reason now.

They crept forward cautiously, their eyes glued to the trail. Once, Jean Baptiste glanced upwards and saw, in the half-light, the sheets of shale that hung over their heads like menacing curtains of death. Steeling himself, he returned his eyes to the trail. So intent was he upon the forward progress of his feet that he did not notice that Laxague had stopped. The collision nearly threw them off balance, down the side of the mountain.

They clung to each other desperately until they had regained their balance. Then Laxague pointed to the boulder formation that loomed before them.

"Batista, the blood leads into the rocks. He is there, our lion. I swear it."

Jean Baptiste followed the ribbon of blood with his eyes and grunted assent. "How do you propose to bring him out?" he asked.

"One of us must go around," Laxague answered. "We cannot leave the far side open."

Jean Baptiste's decision was sudden. He could not allow Laxague, driven by his unreasoning determination, to fall victim to his own carelessness.

"I will go," Jean Baptiste said quickly, and before Laxague could protest, he grasped the man's shoulders and stepped past him on the trail.

His attention divided between the trail and the looming boulders, Jean Baptiste edged his way slowly past the formation. When he had gained the far side, where the formation rose sheer and high, he knew that he was safe for the moment. Even in its madness, the lion would not attempt a perpendicular leap. Jean Baptiste clung tenaciously to the sheer rock, pulling himself slowly to the upper side. When he neared the top, he leaned forward and caught the jutting edge to pull himself up. And out of the corner of one eye, he saw the hindquarters of the lion disappear through the boulders, moving in the direction of Laxague.

"Laxague, look out! Look *out!*" Jean Baptiste screamed as he threw himself forward across the boulder. He landed in the shale, his boots digging deeply into the layer of tiny rocks. The leap started it.

Jean Baptiste felt the sheet begin to move beneath him, and he fought wildly to keep his balance, to get back to the rock outcrop. But he fell to his back in the moving shale, his arms spreadeagled. Glancing down, he saw Laxague's horrified gaze travel first to the shale moving toward him, and then to the lion, crouched on the boulders for a spring.

The shale caught Laxague first, knocking his legs from under him and bowling him downward. The lion landed where Laxague had been, directly onto the moving sheet. It scrambled wildly to return to the boulder formation, and then rolled, clawing, down the side of the mountain.

Steeling himself against the knifelike thrusts of the jagged shale, Jean Baptiste kept his arms and legs rigidly outstretched, coasting on the face of the sheet. Half insensible, he was conscious only of the pain and the choking dust and the roaring in his ears. . . .

When Jean Baptiste returned to consciousness, his first sensation was of a crushing weight on his legs. Pulling himself to a sitting position, he saw that he had kept hold of the carbine throughout the descent. He eased his legs painfully from the covering of shale, then turned on his side to look for Laxague.

The sight that met his eyes through the dusty haze blotted out the pain and the shock that racked his body. Laxague, stunned and bleeding, was fighting to pull himself from the shale that had buried him to the waist. Moving toward the man, its tawny hide torn and matted with blood and dirt, was the lion.

Jean Baptiste twisted quickly over on his stomach and dragged the carbine to his shoulder. Hoping desperately that the barrel had not filled with dirt, that the gun would not explode, he pulled the trigger, even as Laxague looked up through blood-filmed eyes into the snarling face of the lion.

The shot roared against the face of the mountain and clapped back in echo. The bullet crashed into the back of the lion's head, bobbing it with the shock. Its forelegs slid forward awkwardly, and it fell slowly, rolling over on its side. The huge body shuddered convulsively and was still.

The two men sat side by side on the great pile of shale and watched the morning sun rise in a flaming glory, purged in the night of yesterday's weariness. Its first gentle warmth flooded over them, filling their tired and torn bodies with its promise of strength.

Laxague was the first to move. Rising painfully to his feet, he extended a hand, a trifle self-consciously, to Jean Baptiste. His face was marred with dirt and clotted blood, but his eyes were strangely peaceful.

"Come, Batista," he said. "The sheep will be moving."

Jean Baptiste took hold of the extended hand and pulled himself to his feet. He looked back at the torn and lifeless thing on the mound of shale. "The pelt?"

Laxague gestured to the buzzards that circled patiently, ominously, in the sky overhead. "Leave it to its kind," he said.

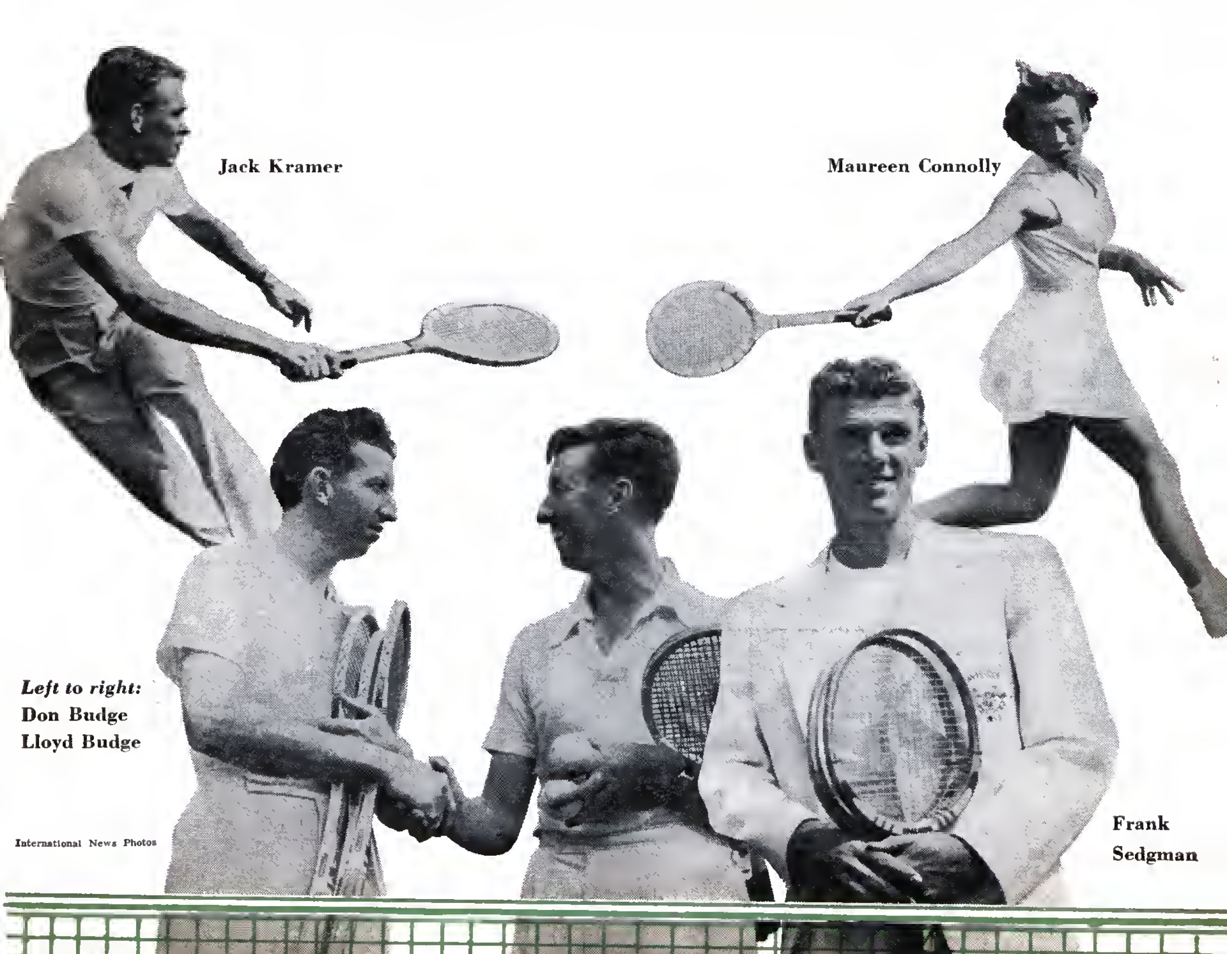
Jean Baptiste nodded, and the two men walked side by side toward the forest. Above them, the buzzards began their descent. —By Robert Laxalt

TENNIS TIPS FROM THE CHAMPS

By IRVING T. MARSH

Here's another in the BLUEBOOK series of charts on how to improve your games. These tennis tips have been culled from the writings of champion players Jack Kramer, Frank Sedgman, Maureen Connolly, Don Budge; and Don's brother, Lloyd Budge, the well known coach.

The tips are intended both for the beginner and the average player. To help in absorbing them, use your racquet to practice them whenever you can.



Jack Kramer

Maureen Connolly

Left to right:
Don Budge
Lloyd Budge

Frank Sedgman

International News Photos

tennis tips...

	SERVICE	FOREHAND
DON BUDGE	As you strike the ball, tilt the top of the racquet slightly forward. The degree varies according to your height. The taller you are, the greater the tilt. Short players don't have as great a margin of clearance over the net and therefore should hit the ball with the racquet held more nearly vertical. If your serves net, you may be tilting the racquet too much. If they are long, the fault may lie in not enough tilt.	Your approach to the ball should bring you to a position about 5 feet in back of where you judge it will strike the ground and about an arm's length from the line of the ball's flight. Try to arrive at the spot before the ball hits the ground so you will have time to take the correct stance for making your stroke.
LLOYD BUDGE	In singles, serve from near the center of the base line. Then, when your service is returned, you will be able to cover the balls hit to your right or left side by traveling about the same distance in either direction.	 In your first efforts, you may cut the back-swing too short. The outcome may be a ball going weakly off the racquet, or the racquet being jarred loose from your hand. The longer the back-swing, the more powerful the stroke.
MAUREEN CONNOLLY	The hardest part of serving is learning to coördinate the toss-up of the ball with the swing of the racquet. When you start your back-swing, wait for your toss until you feel that your racquet head will contact the ball at its greatest height. Your swing must be one complete and smooth action. The only hesitancy must be in the toss of the ball, and you will eventually learn to judge that according to your eye and sense of timing.	In the forehand follow-through, try to aim your racquet along the path the ball has been hit. If it was a cross-court shot, point the racquet head along the court's diagonal. If it was a down-the-line placement, the head should go toward the line. In all cases, try not to let the racquet wind up around your neck as that hampers correct body rotation and means that you have crowded your shot instead of hitting it smoothly.
JACK KRAMER	Stance for the service, if you're right-handed, is with your left side almost directly toward the net. Your left foot should be 3 to 5 inches back of the base line. All services must be made from almost the same position if you are going to have any deception.	In making the forehand stroke, or any stroke, the ball should be hit waist high. The knees should be used as an elevator and, no matter how the ball bounds, unless it is overhead, you still can keep the waist on a level with the ball by use of knees.
FRANK SEDGMAN	Bill Tilden had an exercise he used in teaching the flat service. If you have trouble learning the correct service swing, take a very old tennis frame. Then, standing on the base line, throw the racquet into or over the net in the direction the serve would go. This throw should be delivered from a point as high above your head as you can reach. The swing should develop quickly.	One of the most important rules to remember is to hit through your shot. In importance, this rule ranks with that of keeping your eye on the ball. This idea of hitting through and beyond the ball can perhaps best be grasped by imagining that there are no strings in your racquet as you meet the ball.

BACKHAND

You may have a tendency to underhit your backhand by tilting the bottom edge of the racquet forward. While the undersliced drive is common and the spin it imparts is effective in keeping the ball low, I favor the overspin shot and hitting straight into the ball. The overspin shot is easier to control, carries more power, and makes a better passing shot.

On the high ball, it's important to keep the backswing on the normal level. Then, swing sharply upward to above the point where the ball is contacted. Thus, good overspin. To do this best, turn the palm of the hand upward through the stroke. As the ball gets higher in its bound, the impact of ball and racquet is more a glancing blow, and the pressure of the wrist must be correspondingly firmer.

Don't ever, under any circumstances, start "running around" the backhand (that is, taking the ball on your forehand when it should be a backhand stroke). This leaves the court wide open for your opponent. Also, with this bad habit you'll never develop a strong backhand.

You'll find that your cross-court shot seems most natural. One of the reasons for this is that you know it to be the safest. In hitting a backhand cross-court it's easier to hit the ball deep. As you gain confidence, you can cut down the distance and try to achieve more acute angles. Also, you can gradually decrease the angle and soon be hitting down the side line.

Don't make a punching or poking motion in your backhand. This fault is common among players who lack confidence in their backhands and who wrongly imagine that an abbreviated swing will give them greater control. Take a full backswing and follow through in one smooth stroke, right from the start. That's the only way you can generate power and develop control.

VOLLEYS

Don't move to the net after a drive you hit from behind your base line. Preferably, wait for your opponent to give you a short ball. If he is hitting consistently deep, you must make your own opportunity by taking the ball on the rise and starting forward instantly. Once started, get to the net swiftly or else you'll be caught a ways back and may have to make a difficult scoop-up shot close to the ground.

When the ball has to be half-volleyed (hit just as it starts to bounce), you should bend your knees down under the shot. It is easier to control the ball when you are down level with it than when you are higher and must dip your racquet.

The correct way to volley (return the ball before it hits the ground) is to "punch" at the ball—not stroke it. Since you are up in the forecourt, the ball comes at you with a far greater speed and you don't have time to make a full swing. I find that slightly "choking" the handle (moving your grip up about 1 inch) helps you to keep a firmer wrist and to guide the ball.



In a volley, there is almost no follow-through. You keep your racquet high, hitting with a downward motion and a brushing stroke to get underspin. The forehand grip is the same as that used in the drive. The wrist must be firm and the stroke is made as quickly as possible.

To prepare for a volley, lift the racquet head above the wrist with a short backswing. Move the racquet head toward the ball, meeting it with racquet flat and with a stiff wrist. When hit, the ball should be about 6 to 10 inches closer to the net than the foremost line of your body.

SMASH & LOB

DROPS & CHOPS

DON BUDGE

The overhead smash is made with precisely the same stroke as the service. Instead of taking the ball in back of the base line after tossing it up yourself, you deal with a ball that has been lofted over your head (lobbed) by your opponent to trap you as you rush to the net or to drive you back from the volleying position.

Use a drop shot when you're unable to penetrate your opponent's defense with your drive or get to the net. If he is slower in running up and back than he is across the base line, or if he is none too secure in his volleying at the net, the drop shot is likely to beat him. Also, if he returns it across court, that paves the way for you to make a passing shot through the big opening straight down the side lines.

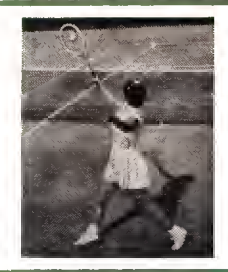
LLOYD BUDGE

The smasher should always keep the ball well out in front of him towards the net. If the lob is deep and over your head, you should turn your back to the ball, watching it over your left shoulder, and run straight back to a point slightly behind where you think you can make your stroke.

In the chop be careful not to angle the racquet level too sharply, since that makes the ball rise into the air and detracts from the effect. When the ball is stroked with the racquet at a very slight angle, it takes a low skidding bounce which feels very heavy against the racquet of the opposing player. This stroke is extremely useful on grass courts, as the balls bounce so low they're hard to get.

MAUREEN CONNOLLY

To hit a smash while jumping takes a lot of practice. Learn to leap just a split second before the ball is directly in front of you. This way you will be poised in air and correctly balanced. Always hit the jump-smash flatly as you will need the power.



To chop well, you must have a moderately paced ball and be in perfect position. A chopper generally has trouble with a hard hitter because the ball comes too fast for the chopper to get completely set for it.

JACK KRAMER

On the forehand, a lob is made with a short stroke, done quickly, with an upward motion. The start of the stroke is the same as that of the forehand drive, but, instead of stroking the ball deep, it is sent upward. A slight snap of the wrist—which you will learn with experience—will put top spin on your lobs.

In chopping, you change your grip just a bit, perhaps so little that you scarcely will notice it. The most effective grip for the chop is that halfway between the clasp used for the forehand shot and that used for the backhand (if you use a different grip for forehand and backhand).

FRANK SEDGMAN

In contrast to your drives and volleys, in which the ball is returned in more or less the same plane in which it arrived, hitting an overhead means a right-angle change of direction requiring near-perfect timing. Hit absolutely flat, and directly at the point you want the ball to go.

The drop requires more wrist flick than any other shot that capitalizes on spin. The racquet must meet the ball solidly, passing sharply beneath it to impart distinct backspin. Being perhaps the most "special" shot in tennis, it needs to be called into play at the right moment. Use it the most sparingly of all your repertoire, in order that it be deceptive.

SINGLES TACTICS

The essence of an all-court attack is controlled speed. Your purpose should be to keep the pressure on, but never to strain so much for speed that you sacrifice control. Similarly, never hit a ball any harder than the situation requires; if your opponent is off the court, obviously there is no need for you to kill the ball.

Often an opponent will have a weakness that he will try to cover up. He may have a weak backhand which he will run around at every opportunity to hit with his forehand. So, get at his weakness through his strength. Give him wide balls to his forehand to draw him over to that side. Quite often he will make a shot that can be returned to his backhand, forcing him to use his weakness.

In hot weather you may find yourself in a grueling three-setter and it will be necessary to replace your energy. My advice is to suck on sugar lumps while changing courts. Never drink a lot of water or cold soda pop. Also take deep breaths between points. This will give you that second wind. In hot weather run cold water over your wrists as that will refresh you and take away your thirst.

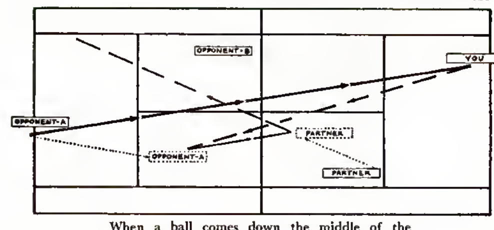
Try to keep the ball in play until you decide on the strategy necessary to win the point. Do your best to cause your opponent whatever inconvenience is possible in making his return. If you notice that he plays an habitual base-line game, attempt to draw him into the forecourt for volleys. His backcourt play may indicate he is weak at the net. Experiment and find out. Lure him in, then force him back.

On hard courts, it's best not to try power serving, because the slowness of the surface and the high bounce make aces difficult. Often you will only hurt your arm and lose precious energy. Serve a reasonably fast first service, then wait for the right ball on which to hit to opponent's weakness. Follow by going to the net and winning with angle or deep volleys.

DOUBLES TACTICS

With two players defending the court, openings are not so easy to find as in singles, and where you place the ball is of more consequence. In singles, many points are won from the backcourt with straight hitting. In doubles, it's at the net that almost all scoring is done. Your efforts and strategy should be directed toward gaining and holding command of the net.

In doubles more than singles, it is important to get the first service into play with moderate pace. The element of surprise is usually worth more than extra speed on the serve, and it is important that you waste as little energy as possible on wild attempts to score aces with your first ball.



When a ball comes down the middle of the court, the player on the left should take the ball.

Playing against the serve, it's best to mix up returns, since you know the server is coming to the net almost every time. Don't let him anticipate where your return will be. An occasional lob will make him cautious, and he will hesitate momentarily before rushing in. This delay will keep him from getting all the way in by the time your return is across, and you will have him in a position where he is forced to half-volley the ball.

The foregoing tennis tips and pictures have been adapted by permission of the publishers from the following copyrighted books: "Budge on Tennis," by J. Donald Budge (Prentice-Hall); "Tennis Made Easy," by Lloyd Budge (A.S. Barnes); "Power Tennis," by Maureen Connolly (A.S. Barnes); "How to Win at Tennis," by Jack Kramer (Ziff-Davis); and "Frank Sedgman's Winning Tennis," by Frank Sedgman (Prentice-Hall).



Illustrated by JOHN LEONE

Virus H

By JOHN D. MacDONALD

Science fiction, and our own experiments, had prepared us for visits from monsters—or something—in space ships. But we never expected these devastating beings who operated outside the laws of Nature.



It can't happen to us—but, brother, it's going to. It has started. Walesville, Ohio, 30 miles from Portsmouth, was the first one. It will take a hell of a while because it's a thorough job. It might not get to you for years. But it's coming.

There were a little over 14 thousand people in Walesville. Plus, of course, those who were caught on their way through.

I've seen it. I don't know when we'll be printing pictures of it. But we probably will. And it will give you a hell of a jolt. I flew over Hiroshima back in September of '45. I covered the Bengal famine in '44 for AP. I once saw a pretty girl jump from a hotel window 23 stories above the concrete sidewalk. But I have seen Walesville. Compared to that, everything else I have ever seen has been like looking into the heart of a daffodil.

Just think of the arrogant stupidity of even our theories about the look and design of alien spacecraft—or about the construction of alien forms of life themselves. We assumed three-dimensional vehicles and three-dimensional forms of life.

Three years ago I left the *Trib* and went to Washington as a civil service A.T. 11. Administrative Technician. That's a smoke-screen designation which means public-relations expert. Fourteen thousand a year. Up until a couple of weeks ago it was a fairly undemanding job. I put a high shine on some brass, put some sugar coating on some new agricultural regulations, made a few other bills more palatable.

Three weeks ago last Monday I was taken off a dull job and shunted over to the Pentagon. The Emergency Committee had just been formed by

secret order of the President. An obscure young Air Force Major General named Klippe was chairman. He'd had something to do at one time with that saucer situation. And he had a good technical background. An extremely bright apple. There were five other men on the committee. Hassling, from the Institute of Advanced Studies, looking like a giant sloth. Ratty-looking little gray-haired Dr. Grinder from Cal Tech. Cold-eyed, tomb-faced Senator Swyth. Rear Admiral John Paul Plover of the CIA, incongruous tricky aluminum pipe stuck in his Boston bull mug. And lean one-legged Brigadier General Max Marker, strategy expert from the General Staff and Command School.

Klippe knew me, and he introduced me and explained my function. I was surveyed with the usual stony skepticism. They never love you until they need you. With various aides and technicians the committee staff totaled about 15. We were all gathered in a big conference room. Klippe had just started when I came in. He went back to the beginning.

"There's no need to caution any of you people about security. You're all cleared for top secret. This project is top secret and important."

"It must be," Grinder said dryly. "Military escort to the airport. I have not even a toothbrush."

That brought a mild laugh. But Klippe didn't look as if he had ever smiled in his life or ever would again.

"Briefly, gentlemen, here is the reason why this Emergency Committee has been brought together. A strange phenomenon has occurred near Walesville, Ohio. Original reports were not believed. A tongue-in-the-cheek article appeared in the Walesville paper. One of the wire services picked it up, gave it limited coverage. An Air Force officer investigated. He reported to me the day before yesterday, in the evening. I was at the spot at dawn yesterday. I had an audience with the President early yesterday morning. Regulars have been flown there and the area is blocked off. Rigid censorship has been imposed. We all leave for the spot by plane in half an hour."

"I am afraid I will have to follow along later, General," Senator Swyth said in his sepulchral voice.

"I am afraid, Senator, that you will have to come with us. It is the President's wish."

Swyth looked annoyed. "Just what is the nature of this—phenomenon?"

"I will not attempt to describe it. I will merely say, gentlemen, that it is an area where most of the fundamental laws of nature, as we know them, seem to be suspended and altered in random, unpredictable fashion." There was a silence during which the stenotype operator clicked out his last few words. I looked at the technical experts, Hassling and Grinder. I saw sudden intense interest. It is an attribute of the large scale mind that it can achieve a suspension of disbelief without undue effort. Marker and Admiral Plover looked puzzled.

"It can be something new under the sun," Klippe said. "It can be a weapon. It can be gone when we get there. The committee represents science, intelligence, defense and government. The President wants to know what it is, and wants valid recommendations as to what to do about it."

It was not gone when we got there. Our military sedans were passed through the roadblock. It was a mile down a country road, in a pasture. The two farm families in the blockaded area had been evacuated. We all looked toward it as the light colonel in charge of the battalion reported to Klippe.

"No change, sir. The area hasn't shrunk or grown any. The same screwy things go on, sir." Grinder, purposeful as a ferret, had started to crawl between the rusty strands of the farmer's fence. "Hey, you!" the light colonel shouted. Grinder paid no heed.

"Let him go," Klippe said. "We'll all go in and take a closer look."

It was an area about 200 yards long, 100 yards wide and 50 yards high. There was an odd sheen to the air within that area. Things beyond it suffered subtle distortion. The limits were fuzzy rather than clear cut. It was a place that was just . . . not right. You could sense that. We were all quiet. You had the feeling that you should hear a sustained note of eerie music. But the day was warm and quiet. I heard wind in the leaves and a brook somewhere nearby.

Rocks floated aimlessly within the shining area. Some of them were half the size of a sedan. They moved about without purpose, like peas in boiling water, though much more slowly. From time to time one of them would fall heavily to the earth as though it had hit some pocket. Leaves and twigs and bits of grass floated in the area too. They would fall also, and just as quickly and solidly as the rocks. They fell as if they were in a vacuum.

"How did that soldier get in there!" Klippe snapped.

I hadn't seen the body at first. It floated as did the rocks. It was a badly misshapen body, doubtless from the many times it had fallen. When a rock would fall it would imbed itself partially in the ground. After a minute or so it would begin to move, then drift free and join the others. When rocks touched in the air they rebounded without sound. When they fell they fell without sound.

The colonel looked uncomfortable. "I think it started bothering him. He wasn't a very stable type, sir. It happened late yesterday, at dusk. He started yelling and ran toward it. He seemed to bounce off it a couple of times. Two other men nearly reached him but he . . . got through."

"What happened to him then?" Hassling said.

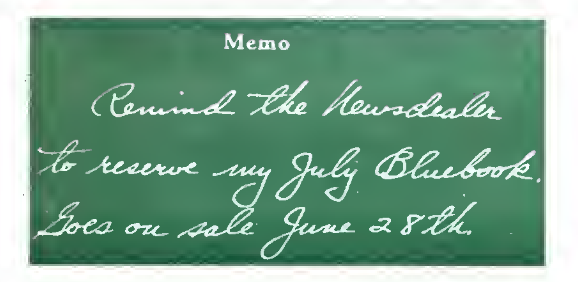
"He . . . floated. I think he died immediately. We tried to get him out but we couldn't reach him. We shoved a long pole in there with a grapple lashed to the end."

"It went in easily?"

"Yes. But it . . . bent. I thought it was refraction, like when you put a stick into clear water. But when we brought it out, it was still bent."

Hassling wanted to see it. We walked over. I could see Grinder standing with his hands behind him, a few yards from the disturbance, peering steadily at it. The colonel showed us the pole. It was of hard wood. It was bent sharply, neatly, geometrically, permanently. About a 20-degree bend.

Klippe let everybody get a good look at the area. He set up a field office in a command car, got everybody gathered around, and listed the experiments everybody wanted to try. Grinder and Hassling wanted equipment flown in. Klippe listed it.



They both had a look of suppressed excitement. They wanted to measure temperature, surface tension, check for radioactivity, and for any waves or rays it might be emitting. General Max Marker said, "If it isn't a weapon, I can at least see how it could be used as one. I'd like to drop some H.E. in there. I'd like to seal a tank and put a line on it and put a couple goats in it and drag it through there. I'd like to see some 20-millimeter tracer fired through it."

Grinder and Hassling became indignant. They didn't want Marker messing with it until they could check it carefully and try to get samples of the atmosphere inside it in sealed containers for qualitative analysis. Klippe reassured them.

"But what is it, gentlemen?" he demanded.

There was no answer. Hassling rumbled something about a vortex of unknown forces, a dislocation in space, rupture in the continuum.

Two days later nobody was any closer. Grinder, in tones of intense irritation, explained the technical problem to Klippe. "The bloody awful thing won't stay *still*. Perform a test fifteen times and you get twelve different results."

Not one of us had guessed what it was. We were too used to thinking in terms of tough metallic shells, and big ports that unscrewed soundlessly to permit tentacled you-name-its to emerge.

It was a space ship.

There wasn't any hysteria. The Emergency Committee went at their task in a sane orderly way. This was Man, attacking a problem, in the best sense of the word attack.

Now consider this. The story is off the rails. Ingredients are missing. Traditionally we should have had national and international hysteria, scare headlines, and, of course, three practically essential people. You know those people well. The old professor, his beautiful daughter, and the young engineer who has a really wild idea of what to do about things. The idea works, always. Man triumphs.

It wasn't like that. We were just a competent group out there eight miles from Walesville, Ohio, trying to make sense out of nonsense.

The only change in the Thing was that it kept getting more opaque. The reason for that was obvious. Those rocks that fell kept chipping and splitting. Sometimes one would fall on another. The grass and twigs and small trees kept getting ground up finer. The floating soldier had disappeared. Perhaps a rock fell exactly when he did. The air inside the thing kept getting more and more murky with floating ground-up debris.

I was generally ignored. My job wouldn't start until they found out what it was. If it turned out to be something unpalatable, I had to guide the eventual press coverage so as to sugar coat it. Marker was convinced that it was a Russian experiment, and a second cousin of psychological warfare. He thought they'd dropped it there like a leaflet. Hassling wouldn't buy that. Grinder had stopped talking to anybody except the bright young men he had imported, with Klippe's permission. We had two floors in the Walesville Hotel. The battalion personnel, of course, encamped at the area. Walesville was convinced we were setting up some kind of atomic installation. The citizens were busy signing petitions objecting to it.

On the sixth day it changed. The whirling inner motion stopped. Everything fell and it was crystal clear again. It had that strange sheen. Grinder and Hassling went to work again.

I heard Grinder make his new complaint to Klippe. "Now the damn thing is absolutely impervious. Come with me. I'll show you."

I tagged along. They'd spray-painted a section of it so they could see what they were working on. They'd borrowed some OD paint from the battalion quartermaster. The scum of paint stuck to a curved featureless surface. By walking over to one side you could see the back of the layer of paint. It gave me a weird feeling to be that close to it. I touched it where it wasn't painted. It was damn cold. The moisture on my fingertips froze at once and I had to pull my fingers gingerly off of it. It made me remember a pre-school winter long ago in Scranton when some big boys talked me into touching my tongue to a metal lamp post when it was

two degrees above zero. They ran. I stood and yelled, glued to the post, until my mother came out with a pan of hot water and unstuck me.

One of Grinder's people used a diamond drill, running off one of the battalion generators. He could get through the paint and that was that. He couldn't get a micromillimeter deeper.

At the subsequent conference Admiral Plover suggested tank trucks full of concrete and high-pressure hoses. He wanted to cement the whole thing over and go home and forget about it. Hassling and Grinder became more indignant than even Marker had made them.

I was on the way back to Walesville at three o'clock the next afternoon, riding in a jeep with a sergeant. We both heard the damnedest noise coming along behind us that either of us had ever heard. That was when it had started, but we didn't know it then. It sounded as if a hundred thousand tons of rock was being rolled down the highway in a big tin barrel. The sergeant, bless him, was quick. He yanked the wheel without even taking time to look back. We bounced through a big shallow ditch and stopped way out in the middle of a field.

I looked at the highway. There was a big blue-and-silver bus on it. I saw something go by. It wasn't a thing, it was an effect that I saw go by. Imagine that a solid three-lane concrete highway can develop a wave, as if the concrete is water. The wave crest went by. It went by the bus too. No bus. The sound went on down the highway toward Walesville. We heard it booming into the distance. We heard it fade away, with faint after-echo like thunder. The sergeant and I walked to the highway.

I will not describe the highway now, or what was left of the bus. The same thing happened to the highway and the bus that happened to Walesville. I will tell you about Walesville as I saw it at 5:30.

First you must imagine a very methodical stubborn child. This child has a big sand box. He has made a whole village in the sand box. Buildings, cars, people and all. All out of sand, carefully colored. On a rainy afternoon this child borrows his mother's eggbeater. He starts at one corner of his sand box and he digs it in deep and churns his way back and forth for a couple of hours until he is right back where he started. Plain sand. But with little bits of flecks of color.

Walesville was a flat gray-brown waste two miles long and a mile and a half wide. Nothing stuck up more than six inches from that surface. The late sun slanted across it. I bent over and picked up a handful of the odd soil. It was like picking up sand on a beach and looking at it closely. You see infinitesimal shells, tiny bits of colored rock. These were larger pieces, but the effect was the same. I held pieces of concrete, pieces of brick, a small bright piece of metal, some bits of paper, a piece of wood varnished on one side, some soil and a piece of pink bone with a small shred of flesh attached to it. I dropped the handful hastily and rubbed my hand on the side of my pants. A flock of birds flew across the expanse, headed for distant trees, peeping excitedly as they flew.

The sergeant found one-half of a dime. He fingered it. His broad tan face showed no expression as he looked at the drab plain. The highway had been the same. There was a faint bluish tinge to the chopped area where the bus had been. The slant of the sun caught small fragments of glass and

Native Wit...

G. M. Woodley, a welfare worker of Middletown, New York, recently received this letter from a client:

Dear Mr. Welfare Worker,

You have explained your troubles in trying to get one of my relatives to support himself by working. I am retired on a small pension and can not support him.

My father who died many years ago was a farmer and a smart man. He had a neighbor who claimed to have rheumatism and took to bed for a year. The neighbor's wife finally appealed to my father to help, since their farm was going to pot and food was getting scarce.

So each day my father walked across the fields and a brook to rub this neighboring farmer with various ointments. But one day, having thought deeply about his neighbor's ailment, my father took along a bottle of turpentine.

My father said: "Henry, I've read in *The Blade*" (that was a newspaper of those days) "of a medicine that might cure you. I have it in this bottle. The directions say you should sit up, pour the fluid on the back of your neck and let it run down your spine."

Henry followed directions. Within a few moments he had leaped from bed and was sitting and splashing in the brook.

Henry's wife came over the next day to thank my father who never had to rub her husband again. She said Henry was out chopping wood.

This true story may help you solve your problem.

Yours truly,
J. A.

Bluebook will pay $25 for each story of "Native Wit" that is published. Each must be original and none can be acknowledged or returned.

metal. A city dump, I thought. A dump where a city had been. Scratch one city. Scratch 14 thousand people. It was too big a concept to absorb all at once.

"Let's go back," the sergeant said.

We went back. We met others coming in. We tried to tell them, but they had to see for themselves. They said the Thing was gone. They said it had left a little after three. The ruin of the highway began a mile beyond the roadblock.

KLIPPE held the next conference at midnight. Generators supplied the lights. The battalion officers attended.

Klippe in a carefully dry voice said, "The area of destruction extends in a five-mile radius around Walesville. There isn't a paved road or a single structure left in that area. Everything has been reduced to . . . rubble. Additional personnel will be here before dawn. Washington wants the entire area sealed. I think we can safely relate the destruction of Walesville to the phenomenon we have been investigating. Are there any comments?"

Hassling moved forward, his face in shadow. "Just this, General," he said. "When human understanding cannot comprehend the purpose, I am forced to assume that the agency at work is other than human. This was selective force. It was not a blind weapon. If an entire city, its buildings, books, generators, garbage trucks, bank vaults and its children can be reduced without explosion to fragments no larger than the end of my thumb, we cannot resist such a force or the technology behind it. Our purpose is to understand, to communicate.

"I am prepared to accept the assumption that the phenomenon we have been investigating is a living creature operating by a set of rules we do not know. We must communicate. We must understand its purpose in doing such a dreadful thing, and convince it that there is no reason to continue such destruction. I recommend that we get men who by training have the best chance of establishing communication."

"Shouldn't we first find the . . . the phenomenon again?" Grinder asked.

"We will find it," Hassling said quietly.

AND we did. Last week. Twenty-one miles from Columbus. The first problem was the evacuation of Columbus. It was discussed at high levels and abandoned. It was felt that you just can't move everybody out of a city that size.

The Thing was behaving as it had when I had first seen it. But with a grotesque difference. It had settled at the edge of a farm. Instead of rocks it was full of farm equipment, cattle, fence posts. It was a sickening difference.

The communications experts went to work. They used movable billboards, commercial artists, models of the solar system and the galaxy. They were very busy little men. If it wasn't so serious, I could have laughed at their frantic efforts to communicate with a big bubble full of floating farm equipment and smashed dead cattle. They could just as well have been trying to get an answer from the moon, or a dead tree. I think they suspected that. But they had their orders, and there was a lot of brass around to see that they kept hopping. Outside of becoming increasingly more opaque, as it had before, the Thing did not react. I don't think anyone expected it to.

Why they condescended to communicate at all, no one will ever know. And we won't be around to wonder too long, I guess. Unless somebody comes up with an idea.

IT happened after the motion stopped. Klippe had lost weight. Our nerves were bad. Somebody had done some talking and a lot of people had moved out of Columbus. Had I any friends there I would have told them to get out. I suspect that's what happened.

The communications people were working just as hard after all the motion stopped.

At two o'clock last Wednesday afternoon I heard the yelling and went running over. Everybody stood and gaped at the side of the Thing. It had grown a door. Fifty yards of it had become opaque and had grown a door. Had I guessed for some wild reason that it would grow a door, I would have thought it in terms of the fantastic—a door 90 feet high and made of gold or something.

But this was just a door. A nice white front door with the usual three-pane window and a brass knob. It even had a mail slot. All that was missing was a house number and a mat saying welcome. It was about three inches ajar. The inference was just too plain. Come on in. There were two ordinary steps, a shallow stoop and that front door.

I give Klippe a mark for guts. It was his party. He didn't wait over a minute. Nobody made any move to stop him. He looked very small as he walked toward the door. He didn't hurry. He walked with a measured stride, went up the two steps, pulled the door open and walked through into blackness without hesitation and pulled it shut behind him.

They timed Klippe. He was in there six minutes and 12 seconds. He came out and shut the door. He walked toward us. I couldn't read his face. People tried to ask him questions. He pushed his way through the crowd, went directly to his tent, took an Army Colt .45, put it in his mouth and blew the back of his head off.

The door was ajar again.

Max Marker tried it. He walked with a swagger. It wasn't as effective as Klippe's steady pace. He was in there for four minutes. He came out with a mind that had been wiped utterly clean.

He didn't know his own name, or where he was. He walked with a small child's aimless gait. He was incontinent and his square chin was shiny with saliva.

Swyth, to my surprise, was next. He came out looking as cold as ever. We gathered around him, waiting for the word. He looked at us. He started to cry. He wouldn't tell us. He knew, but he wouldn't tell us. I know why now. I know why it was that he couldn't even begin to say the words.

Hassling came back out with his face purple. He was sweating heavily and breathing hard. His expression was one of truly gigantic indignation. He turned and pointed a shaking hand at the Thing and ripped at his collar with the other hand and said, "They . . . they say . . ." That's as far as he got before the major artery burst close to his heart, dropping him dead at our feet.

I pitied Plover. He knew he had to do it. He didn't want to. His face was the color of damp chalk. He was trembling all over. I let him get halfway to the door and then I found that I was running. I beat him to the door. He put up a token resistance. I went inside before I could change my mind.

It was complete black dark in there. That was the only impression I had time for. Then they started. It could have been just one. But the impression was clear that it was several.

Don't be misled by bad guesses about telepathy. Once it has happened to you, you know that the thoughts don't come sneaking in, you know it isn't done with pictures. The thoughts come in like heavy silver spikes, driven deep into your head, a hard single stroke for each one. They are not simple thoughts. They are complex, complete explanations and ideas. They are just there. Understanding them is then like the memory process. You remember that you know because the ideas were driven so deeply.

I went back out the door into the world that had now become strange for me. I could not look at people the same way, nor at the familiar earth and sky. I'll never look at any work of man the way I did before.

They gathered around me, several of them trying to ask questions at once. The body of Hassling had been taken away. I could not tell them. I had to have time to think. I looked at Swyth. We knew. We knew we knew. We looked away from each other, conscious of sharing a shameful secret.

Three days after Walesville was obliterated, the site was covered with a soft new carpet of green. It has been identified as a fast-growing, strong-rooted tropical plant which has mutated to survive in this climate. It apparently was sown at the same time destruction took place. That should give you a clue.

I can tell you, but words will not be as strong as what they told me. Why they bothered to tell, I don't know. Maybe they were merely bored, and did it for amusement. It would be boring to be sent on such a routine job.

When I look at things from their angle, I see the earth like a ball, about the size of a basketball. It rotates slowly. I see the great forests, the quiet rivers, the shining ice caps. Then it changes. I see the sickness. I see the forests dwindle. I see the waste lands grow. I see sickness change the face of a world. I see the scabs that are cities. On the night side I see the infected glow of the cities. I see the pock marks of dry lakes, and the pustules of the mine headings.

It's very simple. Humanity began as a harmless organism, eater of nuts and berries. We coexisted with the other wild harmless organisms. But then Old Hairy tied a stone to the end of a stick and the mutation had started. In your body at this moment are many micro-organisms that do not harm you. But should one of them mutate dangerously, you will sicken. You may die.

We were supposed to stay in the forests and eat the nuts and berries. Ecologically we were sound. By so eating we spread the seeds of the forest plants. But a cell went wrong. We outgrew our purpose.

We were an ecologically harmless organism, but we mutated.

As soon as *they* were able to get around to it, they sent a sanitation squad to clean up the mess, cure the sickness. Because to them the earth is the important thing, not the organisms that infest it.

They had come with their sprays and their poisons to clean out the potato bugs.

We don't know who or what *they* are, or their function or where they come from.

Do we try to tell them about our perception of beauty and truth? Do we attempt to explain to them the human soul? The human soul, with its overtones of both Beethoven and Dachau?

What's the defense?

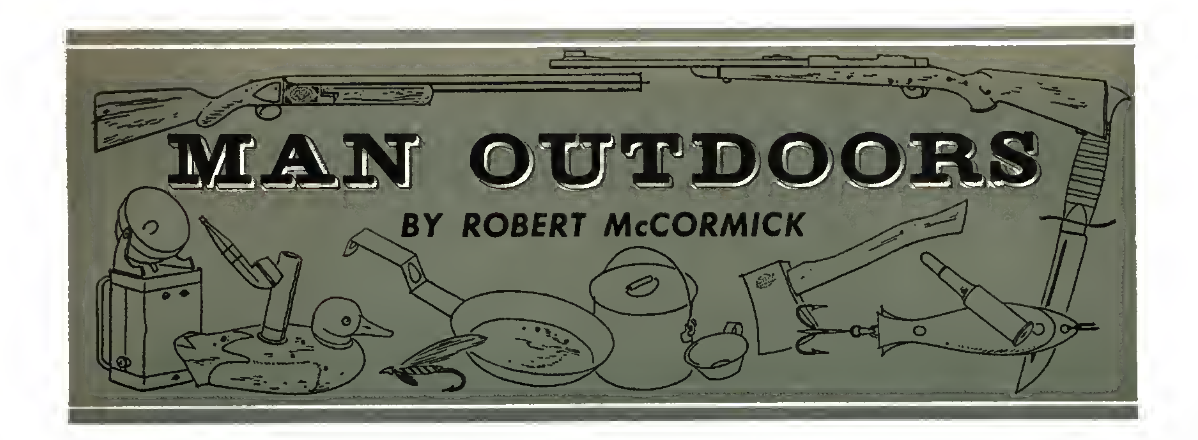
Do we drop some bombs on them? Do we send a sickly child charging with a tack hammer? Same probable effect.

What answer does the virus give to the physician as he prepares the needle for the injection? What do potato bugs write on the petition they present to the man who runs the big spray truck?

In all the yarns somebody has always come up with an answer. Unless somebody does this time, in 15 or 20 years all the works of man will be neat rubble carefully covered with new green life. To come up with an answer means we must justify our existence.

Want to take a crack at it? Want to explain to them why they should leave us alone?

All the Columbus stations went off the air at 11:21 this morning. —By John D. MacDonald



SEVERAL SUMMERS AGO, my wife and I were fishing the Snake River in the magnificence of the Jackson Hole country of Wyoming. While we were resting on the bank, an old codger in a 10-gallon hat ambled up and hunkered down beside us.

"See you got the wife along," he said, nodding approval. "Man ought always to take his wife and kids fishing once in a while; makes 'em get to know each other better."

My wife and I agreed. Thoughtfully, the old boy fell to studying the snow-capped peaks. "Easy to teach 'em, too," he said, finally. "All you gotta do is take 'em fishin' once. Be surprised how quick they get a hankering to learn once they see you tied to a big one against all that scenery. Know mine did."

Well, it seems a great many men have now realized they miss a lot of good family fun when they take off for a fishing jaunt without their wives and children. A recent national survey turned up the surprising information that more than half of all male anglers take their families on "fishing vacations."

Personally, I'd be the first to insist on my purely male prerogative of getting away from family living now and then to grow whiskers in the wilds. But I'd also be the first to argue for taking the wife and kids fishing once in a while. For there's a wealth of fine family sport to be had if you go about it right.

"Women," says Mrs. Ethel B. Cullerton of Chicago, a leading manufacturer of lures, "are just beginning to learn that they have the patience to become far better fishermen than men." While most men would heartily disagree with this, don't be too surprised if, from the very first, your wife begins catching the biggest fish.

Confidentially, mine did!

TEACHING KIDS: Start 'em young, on small fish, and with simple tackle. And, above all, teach them—your wife, too—that theirs alone is the responsibility of caring for their own tackle, hooking their own worms, untying their own tangles, doing their own casting—and cleaning their own fish!

That's the formula used by most successful family fishermen, including Lee Wulff, one of the best I know. Lee taught both his sons, Allen and Barry, to fish before they were three; by the time they were 10, both had caught Atlantic salmon in Newfoundland at their dad's fishing camp.

Lee told me: "Because my boys learned at an early age not only to fish, but also to take care of both their tackle and themselves, I've been able to take them on trips where other, less capable lads would have been too much bother. As it is, both have flown into wilderness lakes and rivers with me for trout and salmon, and they enjoyed themselves immensely."

WHERE TO FISH: Until the family fishing bug really gets you, best limit your teaching activities to smaller fish in waters close to home. You'll be surprised how many excellent fishing spots there are, even in states less richly endowed than Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and the like. And the fish in many of these waters—bass, bluegills, bullheads, crappies, etc.—all are big enough for family fun right from the start.

Some of the best places I know to try first are the farm ponds scattered throughout agricultural areas, even in relatively non-fishing states like Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Illinois. Most farmers seldom have time to fish their ponds with the result that the fish population becomes too great, and the fish are stunted. So, many will welcome a visiting angler, especially if he has his wife and children with him. "When a man's wife is along," a Nebraska farmer once told me, "a farmer knows they'll treat his property like they would their own."

SUMMER SAFETY HINTS: Now that the camping, swimming, picnicking and family fishing season is upon us, a good idea before setting out is to re-

view all you've learned about water safety. For instance, an overturned boat usually won't sink, and therefore makes a good raft to hang onto until help comes; and the average person, once out of his heavy clothing, can float upright for quite a while if he doesn't struggle or thrash about. Also, did you know that the family car carries a life-preserver?

That, of course, is the spare tire. Fully inflated and even attached to its rim, a spare tire can support three or four grown men (up to 750 pounds) indefinitely. It can be used by non-swimmers to save another's life when water accidents occur. Things to do: (1) keep calm; (2) release tire from car trunk (it can be done in less than 60 seconds); (3) roll or carry the tire into the water near the victim; (4) get help. The tire can be used either to support the victim until help comes, or to haul him to safety by means of a rope. For this purpose, I keep a 100-foot length of stout rope coiled in our car at all times.

WHAT'S NEW IN GUNS: This year, after years of nothing very exciting, American arms makers have suddenly come up with a whole batch of new products. Paced by Winchester and its model 50 automatic shotgun with the non-recoiling barrel, introduced last fall, most manufacturers have jumped into the act with both feet.

Rounding out the family of guns planned since World War II, Remington has come out with a new model 740 Woodmaster as the first commercial sporting rifle in .30-06 caliber. It is designed as a companion piece to the model 760 big game rifle, the model 870 shotgun and the model 572 .22-caliber Fieldmaster (also new). The 740 is a semi-automatic high-powered rifle with a gas-operated system instead of the manual pump used on the other three. Despite this, the Remington people have added a forehand grip which resembles the pump-grip on the other models, thus retaining all the family characteristics: simplicity and trimness of design, nice handling and lightness in weight (under 8 pounds).

A two-shot, semi-automatic shotgun is Browning's contribution to the influx of new field weapons. Currently available in 12 gauge only, the gun can, however, be had in two versions: a lightweight alloy model weighing only 6 pounds, 14 ounces; or a standard steel version weighing 7 pounds, 11 ounces. The $64 question: Why only *two* shots when everyone knows the legal load in any automatic shotgun is *three?* Well, why not? If anyone can get off two good shots at either upland game or waterfowl under today's conditions, he ought to be satisfied.

Among other newcomers are Savage Arms' new lightweight (6½ pounds) lever-action model 99-F, in either .300 Savage or .250/3,000 Savage; and Husqvarna's new lightweight (7¼ pounds) bolt-action Crown Grade rifle in .30-06. The new Savage is basically a refinement of the pre-war model 99-T, which you may remember. The Husqvarna's action is basically that of the Mauser; made in Sweden, it is imported for sale in this country by Tradewinds, Inc., Tacoma 1, Wash.

Promised for fall delivery: Standard Magnum loads in 16- and 20-gauge shotgun shells designed for use in standard chambers. Manufacturer: Federal Cartridge Company of Minneapolis, Minn., whose 2¾-inch, 12-gauge Magnum loads helped all but revolutionize waterfowling last year.

Angler's Almanac

1955

Trout **Bass**

Good—With spring run-off over, most trout streams should delight dry-fly purists. Try New York's Beaverkill, Pennsylvania's Brodhead, Vermont's Battenkill, Massachusetts's Deerfield, Michigan's Au Sable, and any stream in Great Smoky Mountain area in South; tail-waters of TVA dams good now, too.

Better—Outstanding, little-known angling for big, sea-running brown trout in Cape Cod's Brickyard and Scorton creeks, Mill and Pamet rivers. Little-tried trouting at bottom of Grand Canyon of Colorado, below Hoover Dam and in Rio Grande near southern end of inaccessible canyon near Arroyo Hondo, N. M. In Maine, first half of month offers fly fishing only for smallmouths. Hottest spot: St. Croix River-Grand Lakes.

Best—Shad runs in Sandy and Willamette Rivers near Portland, Ore. Kamloops rainbow trouting in Lake Pend Oreille, Idaho, and Kootenay Lake, B.C.; start of summer steelheading in California's Kalamath, Oregon's Rogue, Washington's Kalamo; Pacific salmon in San Francisco Bay area; Atlantic salmon in most Eastern Canadian rivers; brook trouting in Morrell River, Prince Edward Island.

MEDICAL REPORT

By Lawrence Galton

Lowering blood pressure: When blood pressure shoots up for no known reason, doctors label it "essential hypertension." One out of every 20 American adults has it.

Recently, a relatively new drug called rauwolfia serpentina was tried out on hypertensive patients with eye-opening results never before achieved. In one test, with patients suffering from mild or moderately advanced hypertension, blood pressure of *every one* of 30 patients dropped to normal. In another test, on a group with severe or rapidly progressing hypertension, blood pressure of two out of every three came down to normal. For the remaining third, results, while not perfect, were mighty impressive: in one case a pressure of 240/140 was lowered to 170/100.

Racing hearts were slowed, too. Within the first week of treatment, beat rates as high as 128 per minute were halved. Moreover, the drug brought healthy sleep to many long-time sufferers from insomnia. A report appears in *Angiology* (5:449).

Nervous stomachs: More often than not, such indigestion symptoms as feelings of pressure or pain in the gut, heartburn and gas come from "nerves" rather than organic disease. Emotional stress can tie the intestinal system in knots—with spasms, or abnormal contractions, that disrupt proper functioning. While antispasmodic drugs are often useful in quieting things down, a new one looks especially good. Called Dactil, it was given in tablet or capsule form to 63 patients and, in most cases, worked well and with amazing speed, providing relief in 10 minutes, even when severe colicky pain was present. Besides its fast efficiency, it's unusual for another reason—lack of such side effects as dryness of the mouth. So reports one investigator in *New York State Journal of Medicine* (55:233).

Three-day sprains: Next time a severely sprained ankle hobbles you, your doctor may get you back in action far faster and with much less fuss by using a new trick: shooting hyaluronidase into the sprained area. The drug is a natural body substance—an enzyme with a remarkable ability for dispersing fluids.

Recently British doctors tried it on 27 people with sprains, then compared results with those for 92 other persons who got the usual treatments of massage, exercise, novocaine shots and adhesive strapping. According to a report in *Annals of Physical Medicine* (2:95), a single enzyme shot brought swelling down dramatically and cut total recovery time to an average of 3.1 days, as against up to 14 days for the others.

Help for old folk: At 85, she had long since become too much of a problem for her children, was now a headache even in the nursing home. She made no effort to help herself, took no interest in anything, refused to leave her wheelchair, made constant demands for attention. Her problem, like that of a good many oldsters long before 85 and many times even before 70, was hardening of the brain arteries.

After two weeks on a drug called Metrazol, her physical and mental condition both showed marked improvement. She left the wheelchair, walked unassisted, took an interest in others, showed improved memory and a healthier general outlook. She is one of half a dozen elderly women, all with the same problem, who made similar gains with Metrazol tablets. A report in *Clinical Medicine* (62:29) is the latest of several indicating that the drug may be a boon for many older people—and their worried sons and daughters.

Clear breathing: Many sufferers from lung disease—such as bronchiectasis, chronic bronchitis, pulmonary emphysema and lung abscess—have one thing in common: breathing trouble. Their air passages clog with sticky mucus, and coughing won't dislodge it. A preparation called Trypsin, however, does the trick neatly. Inhaled in aerosol form, it reaches up to the clogged passages and turns the toughest, stickiest mucus into liquid that's easy to get rid of. According to a report in *Diseases of the Chest* (26:408), a short treatment often keeps the passages clear for long periods.

Briefs: For insomnia, Doriden, a new non-barbiturate drug is effective, non habit-forming and doesn't cause hangover, reports Dr. Seymour Pollack, Veterans Administration Center, Los Angeles. . . . For rheumatoid arthritis, two new drugs, metacortandralone and metacortandracin, are proving several times more powerful than cortisone, produce fewer and less bothersome side effects (*Journal of the American Medical Association* 157:311) . . . . Drowsiness and fatigue caused by emotional problems have been reduced with Meratran, a new drug that acts without killing appetite, raising blood pressure or interfering with sleep at night (*Arizona Medicine* 11:397) . . . . Add a new use for Dexedrine, the mood-lifting drug: stopping nausea and vomiting during pregnancy (*American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology* 68:1142).

Like all medical advances, those reported here are not 100 percent cure-all. Only your doctor is qualified to judge whether a new development may help in your own particular case. For further advice, see him.



I Built My House

By ERNEST BROADHURST with Sidney Margolius

This salesman, who had never even worked on a house before, saved $4,500 by building his own. People who know houses say it's one of the handsomest on the block.

If you had been around the north end of Port Washington, on Long Island, N.Y., one morning in January, 1953, you'd have seen me staring into a large hole in an empty lot with an unhappy look on my face.

The hole in the ground belonged to me and that's why I felt unhappy. It was the foundation for a house—which I had undertaken to build. I'm a salesman, a white-collar man, and I had never even worked on a house, let alone tried to build one myself.

But I had told my wife, Jeannette, that I didn't want to live in a big development of moderate-priced but identical houses; and we couldn't afford to have a house custom built. So, I announced, I would build the thing myself. I had built our 28-foot cabin cruiser in which we roamed Long Island Sound week-ends. So why not a 40-foot house? For $1.25 I had bought Audel's book on how to frame a house, and it seemed simple. All Jeannette had to do, I said, was pick out any plan she liked, and arrange for permits and contracts for the foundation, electricity and plumbing.

Now, my capable and confident blonde wife had done all that. But for the first time since I had announced my intentions, I was worried. I had been a YMCA athletic instructor, had boxed professionally for two years and served on a Navy LSM —and never been afraid. I had confidence enough when I went out to sell and show other men how to

sell in my job as a supervisor for the Fuller Brush Company. But now the houses around me built by professionals suddenly looked huge and complicated. "What do I do now?" I said to Jeannette.

Well, I finally did build the house myself, and it turned out to be as simple as the books said. I built it without another man putting in an hour's labor except for the foundation, chimney, plumbing and electricity. It took me between 600 and 700 hours, working week-ends and holidays. Jeannette and I and our nine-year-old Bobby moved in 11 months from that first worried morning. About the only tools I used were a portable power saw, a hammer and a crowbar to correct my mistakes.

The house is a three-bedroom ranch-type, with a kitchen you can eat in, a large living room (by today's standards), dining alcove and full basement. People who know houses say it's one of the best-looking on our block. The total cost was $12,000, including the lot and sub-contractors' charges. A hard-headed bank appraiser valued it for mortgage purposes at $16,500.

The $4,500 difference—my sweat equity—actually will save us $7,200 in the long run. That's how big $4,500 snowballs to when you add on

Myself

a five percent interest charge over 20 years of mortgage.

But more important than the money, and even more important than getting the kind of location and home we wanted, was the feeling of self-sufficiency I got. I gained a new confidence in my ability to do things. I also feel I have achieved another potential earning skill and am no longer dependent for earning a living on my selling ability alone.

What's more, I won back my physical tone. I had been brought up in an atmosphere of work and physical activity. The years I boxed were the most stimulating of my life. But in recent years I had been getting soft, physically and mentally. By the time I finished the house I had lost my fat and my reflexes were sharp again.

I am convinced now that any man can build his own house with power tools and do it in just the off hours he ordinarily might waste in a year puttering around. But you do have to give up your social life, and even some of your family time, during construction.

I used the materials and techniques that are supposed to make building easier for the amateur, and they worked, including the stock plan Jeannette had seen advertised in a magazine for $25, dry-wall construction, pre-stained shingles and roller painting. Decorating proved to be the easiest job. The roller gave tangible results in a hurry, which is very encouraging to a man building a house.

But what helped most was a trick I figured out for myself.

Before I started the actual house I made a model from balsa wood on a scale of a quarter-inch to a foot, using an architectural rule I had bought for 60 cents. I felt if I could build a model I could build a full-size house, and I wanted especially to figure out the construction of the roof. The plan Jeannette picked was attractive but not simple. It had a hip valley roof—a 32-foot front gable supported by double rafters in a valley. I



suggested we change it to a straight room. She overruled the motion. So I felt I better work out the roof on the kitchen table before tackling it 18 feet up in the air holding a heavy board.

That scale model saved me, psychologically as well as practically. I spent most of my first dismaying day at the site needlessly chipping rough spots off the foundation. Then I went home and studied the model. It got so I would put the model on my dresser nights so I could look at it when



Rear view of completed house. Next project: more landscaping.

I woke up. Every day at first I would stop and watch building crews to see what they did—how they put in a door jamb, framed a radiator and so on.

The second time I went to the site I felt I knew how to start. I moved the steel girder inch by inch into place across the foundation, using broom handles as rollers. Then I started nailing down floor beams.

The important thing, I learned, is to build quickly. A man working on his own house tends to put up a 2 x 4 and baby it—make it the straightest, strongest 2 x 4 ever put in place. But building a house is not cabinetwork. After a few days I went sailing along in spite of minor errors. For the major ones, I had the crowbar.

But what really made it possible to build a house alone was the $65 electric hand saw Jeannette

"You can earn about $50 a day building your own house."

had given me for Christmas. It gave me tremendous service. I estimate it took the place of a man and a half. Nor could an additional man have done as neat a job. I got power by running a line to a neighbor's house. Otherwise I would have rented a generator.

While the house was going up, people would stop by four or five times a day and ask if it was for sale. Ironically, any of them knew as much as I about building a house, or could have found out quickly. By May, less than five months after I started, I was through with the rough woodwork, and was prefabricating windows in the cellar while the electrical roughwork was being installed. After that I put in the insulation and interior dry walls.

The hardest job was the ceiling. When putting up the interior walls, the 4′ x 8′ panels go into place against the 2 x 4's easily enough, but they're too heavy for one man to hold up when working on the ceiling. I almost hired professionals but they wanted $700 to do all the ceilings and walls. So I used my Navy rigging experience and made a frame to hoist up one end of a panel. Then I would nail that end and hoist up the other end.

Getting up the roof ridgepole is also tough for one man. I managed by notching a 2 x 4, putting one end of the ridgepole in the notch, raising that end, and then doing the same thing with the other end. Three days later a near-hurricane blew down the ridgepole, as well as several rafters, and I had to repeat the whole laborious process. My advice to anyone building a house is to get at least another man to help put up the ridgepole.

The more I did, the more I saw I could do. I even discarded my original plan to buy the windows, for $300, and make them myself for $80 including the glass. They are ranch windows which open out—easier to frame than the usual double-hung windows.

But my biggest saving for the time invested came from making the kitchen cabinets, cupboards and built-in dinette. These are costly to buy ready-made, let alone have custom-built and installed. I had gotten an estimate of $1,200 for them. I made them myself with the power saw for less than $200 for plywood, hardware, formica tops and ready-

made metal molding, which needs only to be scored for bending. It took me about 2½ hours to make a cabinet. Drawers were the hardest part. But I was able to bevel and rabbet the sections of the drawers quickly with the power saw, and join them with the modern synthetic resin glues which have great strength and durability. I also cut the counter tops with the power saw.

My own labor really saved about half of the $4,500 of sweat equity we invested. We could have saved $2,000-$2,500 even if I had never lifted a hammer, simply by doing our own sub-contracting. For, as we learned from banks and other authorities, a contractor's or builder's margin is often 15 per cent of the selling price, and sometimes 20.

Jeannette handled the sub-contracting because we recognized that good contracting is essentially good shopping, and women are experts at that. In the process she developed from an average housewife into a woman who knows a great deal about business.

"Let your wife handle the sub-contracting. It essentially boils down to good shopping, and women are experts at that."

We had bought our lot by cruising around an area we liked, looking for for-sale signs. The lot, 60' x 100', cost $1,700. After that, here was our step-by-step procedure before I picked up the saw and hammer and started to build:

The plans. Jeannette had chosen a one-story design, for which I was grateful. This is easier to build by yourself than a two-story house, although costlier to buy since it requires twice as much perimeter, basement area and roof as a two-story house of equal floor space. But in building a two-story house you have to work on a scaffold and thus more slowly.

With the plan we got five sets of blueprints—all for $25. You need these for the building permit and sub-contractors as well as for yourself.

Blueprints are easy enough to follow. But actually you don't have to refer to them very often, once you have noted the dimensions of the room you are framing and have scaled the materials—that is, checked whether the blueprint calls for a 2 x 4, 2 x 8 or 2 x 10 at a particular place. I found I didn't even have to use a ruler much except for measuring off the spaces for doors and windows.

The permit. Jeannette filed the plans at the town hall. They were approved and the permit was issued. The area we built in has a strict building code. It raised the cost of our house above its probable cost in many other places. For one thing, we had to have a poured foundation instead of cement block, which would have saved $500 or



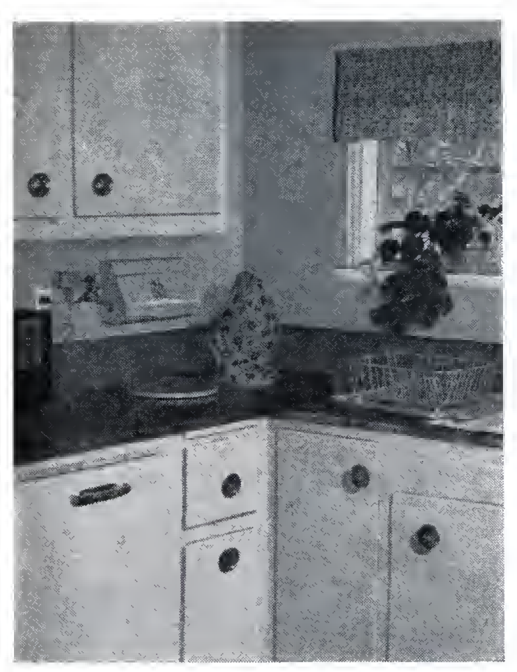
Once underway, Ernie found he didn't even have to use a ruler much, except for doors and windows.



Ernie's wife, proudly posing before partly-completed home, handled all subcontracting details.



At this stage, Ernie knew he just about had the job licked. Altogether it took him 11 months.



Instead of buying kitchen cabinets and other built-ins, Ernie made them and saved $1,000.

more. But the precise code was a help to us as amateurs because it told us just how to build: how far back on the lot, how far from the neighbors, and so on.

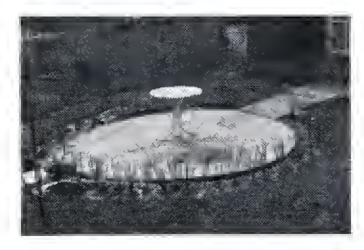
Also, at every step the construction was inspected so we didn't have to worry about the basic quality of either our work or that of the contractors. For example, the town inspected to see that the sub-contractor actually made the footings 18 inches with 10-inch walls as specified in the plans. A lot of people are afraid to build themselves because they think they will do something wrong. You can't. In a built-up area the building inspectors will bird-dog you at every step, and especially closely if you are building yourself. The work has to be done right or you can't continue. There's no need to worry that a self-built house will emerge askew, or blow down in a storm.

The lumber and other materials. Jeannette took the blueprints to three yards and asked how much rough lumber was needed and the cost. When the lumberyard people found we were a couple building by ourselves, they opened up their hearts and gave us a fabulous amount of information. And they can estimate the lumber cost for a house within $100. Their estimates ranged only from $1,200 to $1,400, unlike the great variation we found for the sub-contracts. We placed our order with the $1,200 yard. By ordering all the rough lumber at one clip we got close to a builder's price. If we had ordered a few 2 x 4's at a time we would have had to pay retail prices—10 to 15 per cent more. But we still split our payment by requesting delivery in three loads as needed.

If I had had time I could have saved still more by hiring a truck and picking up the lumber at the yard, or by going upstate to a sawmill.

I could have cut the cost further if I had not ordered all No. 1 grade. Many mass builders would have used No. 2. But No. 1 lumber is smoother. This is especially important for dry-wall construction when walls need to be true and smooth. Generally it doesn't pay to cut costs too closely on materials. I could have saved $50 by using asbestos shingle on three sides of the house as is often done these days. But my wife vetoed this, and I also found I preferred the appearance of wood shingles.

I finished the bathroom walls with plastic tiles. Anyone can put them up. But had I known about the new ceramic tiles already coated on the back with pressure-sensitive adhesive, I might have used them—Jeannette would have preferred them—even though they cost more.



Out back is patio for summer dining. Shrubs surrounding it will in time grow into a green wall of privacy.

Sub-contractors. Jeannette got five bids each for the excavation, foundation, plumbing and heating and electrical work. We found amazing variations in estimates. For excavating, the low bid was $150; high, $500. We took the $150 bid.



Corner of living room is light and airy. Ernie made windows himself, thereby cutting cost $220.



Fireplace is made of natural stone which gives living room a warm and homey feeling, adds that custom touch.

But for the other more skilled contracts we didn't always take the low bid. We were afraid we might get a cheap job with a cheap price, so we tried to hit a happy medium. When Jeannette saw a crew pouring concrete she would stop her car, observe the care with which they worked, ask for the boss and get an estimate by showing him our blueprints. She finally gave the job to a man who quoted a medium price and seemed to be doing neat work at one place and whose machinery seemed well kept. The price for pouring the foundation, plus front and back steps, was $1,025.



Ernie, Jeannette and son, Bobby, after moving in.

Plumbing was the largest single expense—$1,625, including a forced hot-water heating system. The electrical work cost $238. I hired bricklayers to put up the double brick chimney and fireplace, because I wasn't sure I could do it. Later, after I had built two brick planters in front of the house, I felt I should have done all the brickwork.

Besides inspecting work the sub-contractors had done elsewhere, we further safeguarded ourselves by having detailed specifications and putting in the contract things we wanted—for example, that the place was to be left broom-clean. We also made sure the sub-contractors were all well established people—not fly-by-nights—by asking about them at the lumberyard, bank, hardware store and other places.

Even with these precautions, we were still stabbing in the dark, and I wasn't quite satisfied with the completed plumbing. The pipes stood out too far from the basement walls and the hot water pipes were left uninsulated. I can cover them myself, but I know now I should have watched the sub-contracting more closely as the work was being done, or possibly not grabbed at the lowest bid for the job. The other estimates for plumbing and heating had been around $2,000—about $400 more than I paid.

We made one error that almost forced me to add a second story to the house. It was not until I had started on the frame and Jeannette was talking to the bank about a mortgage, that we realized we needed title insurance. We had been impatient and had started building without a title search. When it was made we found there was a covenant restricting the plots in the area to two-story houses. We were sick with anxiety. We appealed to a lawyer who appealed to a title insurance company, which finally decided that kind of restriction would not stand up in court, and insured our title. We really should have asked for title insurance *before* we closed for the purchase of the land.

During construction we were strapped for cash. The bank had agreed to advance a $10,500 mortgage in three payments of $3,167 each, as frame, sheathing and exterior were completed, and the final $1,000 when shrubbery and walks were in place. Meanwhile we had to pay for the land, foundation and rough lumber—over $4,000. We could have raised the money by getting a separate construction loan, or borrowing from relatives, and getting a larger mortgage to repay such loans. But we squeezed through by using all our savings and as much of my current salary as we didn't need for eating. Anyone wanting to build himself needs at least the price of the land before he can get any kind of loan.

"Building your own house not only saves you money, but gives you a feeling of self-sufficiency, a potential extra earning skill, and a good physical tone."

I did the finishing exterior concrete work myself, using an electric mixer rented for $6 a day. In three days my neighbor and I poured the footing for the brick planters, the walk, the patio and a patio for him. I bought ready-mix concrete for the driveway. The total cost of ready-mix, other materials and rental of the mixer was $190 ($100 for the ready-mix), as compared to a contractor's quoted price of $1,000.

The average man can do a surprising amount of efficient building, especially with modern power tools. He either doesn't realize how good he is, or how simple building really is. For not knowing how, he often pays a lot of money. A friend of mine needed a new plank for his boat. A boatyard wanted $170 for the repair. I helped him put it in at a cost of $12 for the plank. Building a house is simpler than building a boat. In a boat, nothing is straight. In a house everything is, and you can use standard materials.

I figure you earn about $50 a day building a house yourself. This includes what you save not only on labor costs, but also on the contractor's charges. Besides that, you get just what you want in a house. When you buy one it's always a compromise.

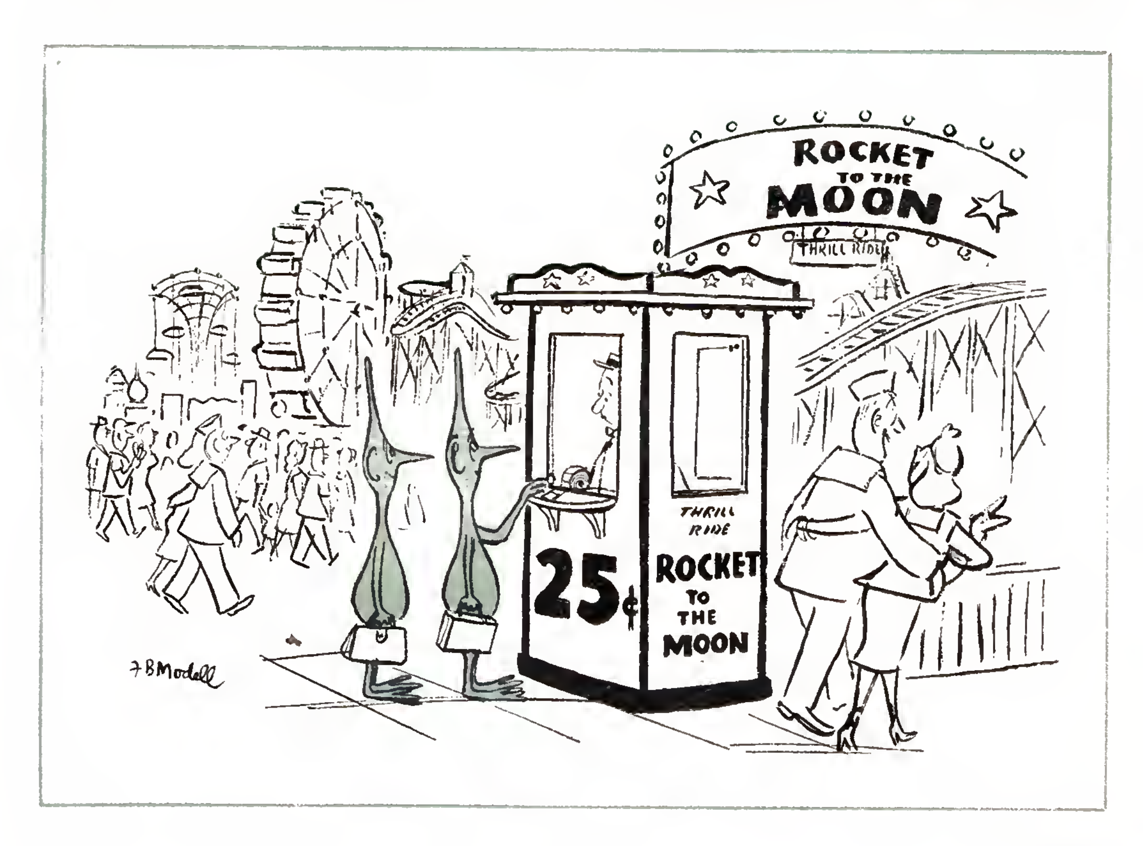
My own plunge into do-it-yourself building had a noticeable effect on the neighborhood. The man next door, who let me use his power for my saw, had never done any carpentry himself. But after watching me for a time, he did a beautiful job of completing his expansion attic. Now he's finishing off a basement room—you can't stop him.

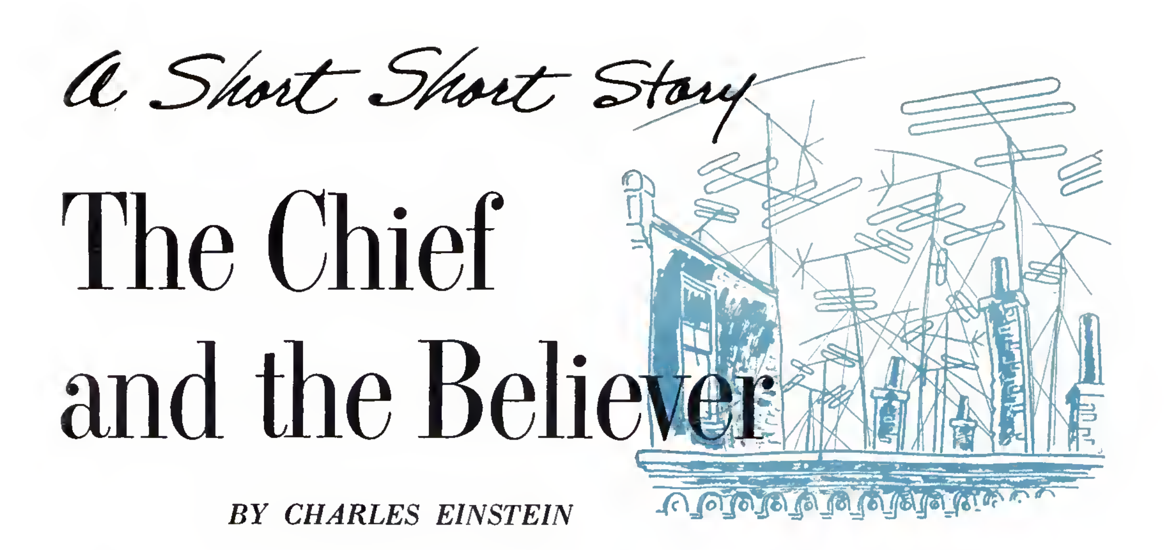
Another man, from the next block, had signed a contract to have a builder put up a shell for $4,500, which he would finish himself. This is a seductive idea but you don't have much when you buy a shell; you have the least part of a house. I showed him that the lumber for the shell would cost only about $1,200-$1,400. He came back several times to be reassured of his ability. He finally gave the builder $200 to let him out of the contract and built the shell himself, with some help from relatives.

When he was almost finished, I asked him if he was sorry he had done it. "I was at first," he said. "But not now."

Like me, he had come to feel that sense of achievement few other things can give you as completely as building your own house. Much as I was in love with the sea before, now I love building.

As for my wife and I, it's hard to remember another year when we were closer together than the year we built the house. —By Ernest Broadhurst





A Short Short Story

The Chief and the Believer

BY CHARLES EINSTEIN

I WON'T SAY wrestling is fixed. Naturally I won't—I'm in the business a long time, promoting this stuff. And anyway, I've seen the bad guy beat the good guy now and again. Of course, that meant a re-match, and I never saw the bad guy win two times running, but that may not mean anything. Coincidence always plays an important part in professional wrestling. Ever notice that? Ever notice how the main bout always manages to end before the TV time is up? Fantastic.

Anyway, this is about me and Chief War Cry and old Mr. Asch who lives next door, and that sassy little kid Stevie down the street, who is my vote for the cruelest kid that ever lived.

To put first things first, this Chief War Cry is an Indian who wrestles for me. Originally, I journeyed up to this Indian reservation in New Hampshire to sign up a couple of young warriors—you know, the gimmick: something unusual. The place was in a little clearing with a bunch of buildings and a sign that said it was a reservation. There was a little movie house and a quick-freezing plant and an office out near the gate with a maiden in a green sweater working the typewriter inside.

I went in.

The maiden said, "How do you do?"

"How," I said. "Chief, he here?"

"Yes," the maiden said. "What's on your mind?"

"Me paleface from beyond waters," I said, slapping my money belt. "Have much wampum for braves."

She nodded and pushed the button on the intercom. "There's a nut out here," she said. "He's from beyond the waters." She looked back up at me. "Go right in."

I went right in, and I want to say this chief was all right. He had a little sign on his desk that said "Chief War Cry," and he was dressed in a business suit; but there was a band around his head and he had a mean knife on the table.

"How," he said.

"How," I said. "Me paleface from beyond waters." I gave him my card. "Look for full-blooded brave, mebbe two. Wrestle."

The chief's voice was low. "Make wampum?"

"Heap," I told him. "Play Allentown, Wilkes-Barre."

"Get hurt?"

"No get hurt. Television."

"Um. Contract?"

"Find brave first."

"No need brave. Got chief." He stood up.

So I came back to New York with the chief.

Well, right away there was trouble. Nobody believed this was really a full-blooded Indian, not even after he sold Manhattan Island to Morrison, the booking agent, for $28. He was all right as a wrestler, and the fans came to watch him, but you could tell nobody really believed in Chief War Cry.

Nobody, that is, except old Mr. Asch. Mr. Asch is from the old country. He lives next door to me with his married daughter and his son-in-law, and he is a good 80 years old if he's a day.

I'll tell you this, he's a nice old guy. He stays out of people's way, he don't bother nobody, and he tries to keep busy. When I'm out of town he looks after the house for me, makes sure the windows are closed when it rains, brings in the mail. He understands English pretty good, but he doesn't talk it. The only word of English he knows is Crestwood. That's the name of the dairy that brings the milk. When they need an extra couple of quarts next door, or some cottage cheese, the old man goes to the door and yells out, "Crestwood, oho!" This gets the milkman's attention.

Well, the only thing in this old man's life is the



wrestling on television. Eleven, 12 o'clock at night, when the family's in bed, he turns on the little 10-inch set in his room and watches the wrestling. He loves it. He really loves it. He shouts at the wrestlers, hollering encouragement and instructions in that foreign language of his, and yipping along as the bout progresses. In the summer, when the windows are open, you can hear him half way down the block—"Hip! Hip hup! Hup Hup!"—sitting in his room all by himself and having a hell of a time.

Does it hurt anybody? Does it get in anybody's way? No. It's an old man who has a few years left and likes to watch the wrestling on television.

I don't know. I don't know what it is makes people stink it up the way they do. Nowadays everybody thinks charity is something that was invented for income-tax purposes. Why would anybody want to hurt an old guy like that? Why?

But no, you got to have somebody like this 12-year-old kid, Stevie, down the block. Here it is, one afternoon, and Chief War Cry's going to wrestle at the Arena that night, and I'm sitting on my front porch with maybe an hour to go before it's time to take the train into town, and old man Asch is sitting on his front porch next door, sort of humming to himself, and here comes this Stevie up the block, home from school.

This Stevie's got a father in the D.A.'s office. Big deal. So he knows everything. And today he's got some news for old man Asch.

"Hey!" he yells to the old man.

"Oho," the old man says, and nods pleasantly, up and down. He likes company.

Stevie stops and squints. "Going to watch the wrestling tonight?"

"Oho."

The kid nods his head. "Anybody ever tell you it was rigged?"

It was like somebody punched me in the stomach. I stared across at the old man, and for a minute I figured he wouldn't understand, so it would come out all right anyway.

But Stevie was figuring the same way. He starts substituting words, till he can find one the old man'll get. "Bagged," he says, "Phony. Fake. Crooked."

You could see it was penetrating. There was a look of genuine puzzlement on the old guy's face, as if he had to hear more, whether he really wanted to or not.

"My father told me," Stevie said, as if that clinched it. "That's why nobody ever gets hurt in the wrestling on television. Didn't you ever sit there and wonder why nobody ever got hurt?"

The old man looked at the kid for a while, the kid just standing there with that sassed-up look on his face, and then, slowly, the old guy got up out of the chair and had a look at a couple of the potted plants that were there on the porch, and then he went on into the house, with his shoulders down, being careful as always that the door didn't slam.

I could have murdered that kid, Stevie. I could have killed him. But then the idea hit me and the more I thought about it the more wonderful it was, and I was still working it over in my head on the train going into town.

All I had to do was tell the chief to go out and kill his man tonight, and what would be more wonderful than that?

It takes 40 minutes for the train ride into town, and I'm like everybody else. No better. I got no guts at all. By the time the train got there, I knew all the reasons why I couldn't go ahead with the idea. The television people wouldn't like it. Somebody might really get hurt. Maybe the chief wouldn't go for it. So forth and so on.

And what was it, after all? It wasn't the end of the world. There's worse things than an old man getting bumped.

And besides all that, I figured maybe what set Stevie off was his father might have told him something about one of my wrestlers, like possibly the rumor that Chief War Cry wasn't really a full-blooded Indian. I mean, nothing that could hurt me, but just the idea that if Stevie knew anything specific, he shouldn't be encouraged to speak up about it. He'd already done enough damage just talking in generalities.

So I ended up doing nothing at all.

I'm trying to get across here my mortal oath that I had nothing to do with what finally happened. You probably read about it in the papers. It was really something.

Chief War Cry was going in the main event that night against an opponent named Hooded Horton—you know, one of those mystery men. He wrestled with a pillowcase over his head, with holes cut for the eyes.

Well, Hooded Horton and the chief are going at it fine and dandy, grunting and rolling around on the floor on the side of the ring nearest the cameras. All of a sudden there's the most horrifying war whoop you ever heard. The chief is on top of Hooded Horton and he's got his fingers around the guy's throat and he's trying to kill him. Murder him. End his life.

At first, nobody could quite believe it. Then the place started going wild. Ushers and cops piled into the ring to pull Chief War Cry off his man. They had to take Hooded Horton to the hospital and the chief wound up in the clink on an attempted homicide.

I rode down with him in the paddy wagon, and he told me the story. In the middle of one of their clinches, Hooded Horton had reached back behind the chief's head and pulled his scalp lock. That is one thing you should never do to a full-blooded Indian. Tradition establishes this as the insult supreme. It's an invitation to murder.

I didn't get home till four o'clock in the morning, but old man Asch next door was still up—too happy, too excited to sleep.

It's all right. I buy it. That kid, Stevie, had it coming. —By Charles Einstein

Illustrated by JAMES JORDAN

Men you never know:

Breadman

BY JOHN KORD LAGEMANN

Rodger Smith makes a stop at a different house every two minutes, runs not walks to and from his truck, which he gets into and out of 200 times a day. He owns his home, struggles to make ends meet, is proud of his wife and two sons and "after all, not everybody can be a millionaire."

"THE FIRST FEW YEARS after I got out of the Army," says Rodger Smith, "I was always expecting something big to happen—money, travel, adventure—I never knew what exactly. After the kids came I kind of put all this behind me. Now I feel pretty good just getting along."

Rodger Smith, 34, is a route man for the North Columbus, Ohio, branch of the Omar Company, the country's largest home-delivery bakery chain. "Just getting along" for Rodger means earning $6,000 to $7,000 a year in commissions on bread and pastry delivered to the customer's door.

During his six years on the job, Rodger's income has brought him a new house with a basement bar and rumpus room, a '53 Buick coupe, TV and radio sets, a power lawnmower, a home movie camera and projector. It's provided Sunday afternoon golf, Wednesday night bowling, vacation trips to Vermont and Florida, and pleasant get-togethers with friends and neighbors. Most important to Rodger, it's supported a happy family life with his wife, Rose, and their two boys, Rex, two, and Rodger, Jr., four.

When you consider that Rodger swings all this by keeping 5 cents of every 25-cents-worth of bread and cakes he personally sells and delivers, you can see why he says of his job: "It's strictly a battle against time all day."

Many of us depend on men like Rodger—home-delivery men—to bring our daily needs right to our door. But we take these men pretty much for granted. Maybe we know their names, but more likely we don't. They're just "the vegetable man," "the eggman" or "the breadman," and most of us would be hard put to identify them in a crowd. We seldom give them a second thought, unless they forget to stop with our rolls for dinner or our morning Danish—and then the thought isn't printable.

What's it like to be a home-delivery man? How does he live? What are his problems? To find out, I spent several days poking into all the corners of the life and work of Rodger Smith, breadman.

Rodger's customers are 560 families in one of the many new housing developments which have sprung up all around the city. Half these are on his Monday-Wednesday-Friday route, half on his Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday route. This means that each day, six days a week, he runs, not walks, between his truck and some 280 front or back doors. As he runs his left arm is extended almost horizontally to counterbalance the weight of the aluminum trayful of bakery products he carries in his right hand. Just getting in and out of a truck 200-odd times a day is hard work. The stairs that have to be climbed to almost every doorway have made Rodger wonder once or twice if he could get through a whole day of them.

Sometimes when Rodger rings a doorbell, the housewife inside takes her time about answering. Or she may enjoy talking so much that Rodger backs out to his truck, smiling all the while. He can't explain—and it never occurs to him to try—that he's been up since 5:30 to load the truck and


White



get started on his route by 7, that the remaining 7 or 8 hours of the delivery day divide up into less than two minutes for each house he has to visit. This doesn't allow for the 10-minute coffee break he takes at 10 A.M. or the 2- or 3-minute stops he makes twice a day to visit the men's room at filling stations on his route. Nor does it take into account the bookkeeping he has to do on the fly, entering every sale and every new order in his bulging account book.

"There are easier ways of making a living," says Rodger, "but after all . . ." and he smiles as he glances across the living room at Rose getting Rodger, Jr., and Rex into their pajamas, ". . . after all, not everybody can be a millionaire."

Until he had to earn a living, Rodger never thought much about money. Ever since he can remember he has thought he would rather be a big-league ball player than anything else in life—even a millionaire. The closest he got to this goal was as a teen-age kid in Detroit when he played on the midget baseball team sponsored by the city firemen. A faraway look still comes into his eyes when he

Off to work at 6 a.m., Rog gets soundly bussed by Rose. "She could do this for hours," he says.

To cover his route of 280 families in day, Rodger has to dog trot between truck and houses.

tells about the day they played in Briggs Stadium and won the city championship. The coach told him he'd make a really first-rate athlete if he'd just grow up a little. But he never topped 5-feet-6-inches and until recent years he couldn't get his weight much over 100.

That was heavy enough for the Army, though. Rodger got his greetings from the President toward the close of the war in March, 1945. After completing his 18 months with the infantry as a company personnel clerk, he went to Columbus to stay with a married sister while he looked for a job.

He found it at Curtiss Wright, where he became a "contact timekeeper," clocking the time spent by workers on various machining operations. He stayed with that job a year and a half.

Rodger met Rose the first day he walked into the plant. He was 27 then. Rose was 25. Her job was to pick up mail in the various offices and deliver it to the mail room.

"At first he didn't think I was worth noticing," says Rose. "So then one day I asked him why he didn't write his mother a letter so I could mail it for him. That was how we got acquainted. Pretty soon he asked me for a date. I turned him down twice before I accepted."

They dated for a year and a half before they were engaged. With marriage ahead of him, Rodger began looking around for a better paying job, and answered an Omar Company advertisement in the *Columbus Dispatch* which offered "permanent and steady employment in depression-proof business—interesting, healthy, outdoor work in which men are their own boss 95 percent of the time." That was in June, 1948.

Getting the job as a route man delivering bread was a lot more complicated than getting a job in a defense plant making fighter planes. It takes a peculiar combination of necessity, determination, and courage to get up, rain or shine, in the early morning hours before dawn, get in an out of a truck 200 times a day, ring doorbells and keep smiling despite refusals and rebuffs—all for that one penny on every nickel of sales.

Because the success of the entire bakery chain depends on the driver-salesmen's ability to get along with people, the Omar Company picks its men with complex care. After a preliminary interview with the district personnel manager, Rodger took an Otis Intelligence Test, a George Washington University Social Intelligence Test, and a Johnson Temperament Analysis.

In the first he answered some 75 questions including: "A man who is adverse to change and progress is said to be: 1. democratic, 2. radical, 3. conservative, 4. anarchistic, 5. liberal."

In the Social Intelligence Test Rodger pondered such problems as this: "You are calling on a close friend who has been ill for some time. It would be best to: 1. Tell her of the good times you are having. 2. Tell her of the doings of a number of mutual friends. 3. Discuss her illness. 4. Impress upon her how sorry you are that she is ill."



Rodger catches breath while housewife decides what to buy. Her son wanted cupcakes.

In the Johnson Temperament Analysis, Rodger answered 182 questions about the "S" or subject, which in this case was himself. Sample question: "Is S appealed to strongly by young lovers who are hampered by opposition?"

In all three tests, Rodger scored above average. He also passed a driver's test and showed up well on a physical examination. The Omar Company has its employees bonded by a company which makes thorough-going investigations of reliability. In addition, the Omar personnel office checked with Rodger's previous employer, interviewed all the people he listed as references, checked his credit standing, and made a routine check with the police in several cities to unearth any run-in with the law. The record was completely clear.

The final test is the "home check"—a visit by a company personnel man to the applicant's home.



After a long, leg-wearying day, Rodger's spirits lift as he drives down his street.

The center of interest on these visits is usually the wife. How does she feel about a job that requires her husband to get up early, sends him home too tired to feel like going out, makes him work on Saturdays? Her attitude is supposed to have a lot to do with her husband's chances of staying with the job. Since Rodger wasn't married yet, the personnel man talked with his fiancee, Rose. Here again, Rodger looked like a good bet.

For two weeks as a "junior salesman," Rodger received a guaranteed $65 a week while he got the feel of the job with a veteran salesman who was assigned to break him in to his new route. After two weeks he went on a straight 20 percent commission with small deductions for uniforms and health insurance. As long as the company keeps a man on a route it guarantees him a minimum of $75 a week, which he can collect for a time in case of sickness. But men who fail to make the minimum in commissions for reasons other than sickness don't stay on the job very long.

Rolls and Honeymoon

To make over $75 a week in commissions, the company figures that every route man should have about 500 steady customers and that one out of every four families in a given neighborhood can be "sold." So the new man gets a territory of about 2,000 homes and it's up to him to make and keep the steady customers. The 25 percent coverage is high, but Rodger made it during his first year, and sold enough bread, pies and cakes to make $5,000.

Exactly a year to the day after he started working for Omar, Rodger and Rose were married in St. Augustine's Church and then drove in Rodger's new '49 Dodge to spend their honeymoon in Niagara Falls.

After they got back from their honeymoon, Rodger and Rose went to live with Rodger's mother. After Rodger, Jr., was born in September of 1950 they began looking around in earnest for a house of their own. They bought their house in a new project on Chatham Road from a blueprint before the foundation was laid. It cost $10,200. No down payment was required. Rodger swung it on a GI loan which requires a payment of $62.50 a month for 25 years.

They're not sure, though, that the house will be big enough for them much longer. They want more children. "Temporarily, we've settled for three," says Rodger. "Four would be the absolute limit for this house," says Rose. In case there is a third, Rodger is planning on making a room upstairs in the attic.

No matter what happens, the Smiths want to stay in the same neighborhood, which feels like home to them now. It's pretty much the same kind of neighborhood Rodger serves on his route. The houses are all new. Each has its picture window in the front with a decorative lamp showing through the window, a driveway on one side, and a fairly new low to medium-price car parked near the door. The back yard is usually fenced off and has a swing or a sandpile. A lot of back yards have outdoor fireplaces. There is always a clump of dwarf evergreens in front of the house.

Some of the men on the Smith's block work for North American Aviation. There are two or three policemen, a couple of mail carriers, a phone repairman, several accountants and a veterinarian.

With them he sometimes plays his favorite game—golf.

When the Sunday weather is right he drives out to Bridgeview golf course. "For $2 you can play all afternoon," says Rodger. "But you also need an understanding wife. For instance, somebody'll call up on a Sunday morning and say, 'How about some golf?' Another fellow'll say: 'Just a minute, I'll ask my wife.' Me, I say, 'Sure, I'll be right over.' Rose knows what sports mean to me and she never complains." When Rodger plays golf he now wheels his clubs around in a luxurious caddy-car for which members of both his and Rose's family each chipped in $5 to surprise him on his last birthday.

In the summer when the days are long, Rodger goes down to Whetstone Park at the foot of Chatham Road and plays softball with the other young family men. After supper they often play till they can't see the ball any more. The big game is Thursday night when the neighborhood teams compete and they get quite a crowd watching. Rodger plays shortstop and writes up the game for the *Clintonville Booster,* the regional weekly. On Wednesday nights he bowls with the Omar Team in the Columbus Industrial League. This costs him $3 a night and it's his biggest single entertainment expenditure.

The Smith's two boys are fine, healthy looking children but just the same Rodger keeps a solicitous, fatherly eye on their athletic potentialities. "Boy, there's strictly one thing that I'd be disappointed in," says Rodger. "If my kids didn't go to college and become good athletes."

After supper Rodger goes into the living room, reads the *Columbus Dispatch,* or plays with the children, while Rose cleans up the kitchen and does the dishes. "He doesn't like to sit around a messy table," says Rose. If Rose is really snowed under, Rodger helps with the dishes, but this is rare. As Rose says: "He's got his work and I've got mine." She thinks a woman needs honest praise a lot more than she needs help. "When Rodger says it's good, it's good."

By 8 o'clock the children are finally in bed. Rose used to like to sew or read in the evening. But since Rodger has to start work so early he usually retires by 9:30 at the latest. And as Rose says: "When Rodger goes to bed I don't feel there's anything for me to stay up for."

On working days, Rodger gets up at 5:30. Rose gets up at the same time to make breakfast for him, but when he leaves at 6 she goes back to bed till 7:30 or so, when the children wake up.

Rodger drives over to the bakery headquarters about a mile away. Each night he leaves his order for merchandise, one week in advance. Every morning when he comes in his load is stacked behind his truck. He checks it as he puts it in the truck to be sure nothing has been left out. By 6:30 the truck is loaded. Since Rodger can't start ringing bells till about 7, he usually hangs around the bakery 10 or 15 minutes longer talking with the fellows, mostly about sports.



Rog looks over street of newly-built houses. When folks move in, he'll have new customers.

Whenever his gasoline gets low, he has the tank filled up at the company pump. The company takes care of oil, tires, antifreeze and repairs. Rodger's truck has a governor that keeps the speed below 35 miles an hour. But in his start-and-stop progress through his route, he never even approaches that limit. For five of his six years on the

On day off, Rog watches Rose make spaghetti with $29 machine that's her pride and joy.





Spaghetti is a family favorite. Rose learned how to cook Italian dishes from her mother.



Come evening, Rodger sprawls out on floor to help his two boys color their drawing book.

Rodger and Rose (behind bar) entertain two neighborhood couples in basement game room.



route he's won safety citations for no accidents. His only accident occurred when he backed his truck into a telephone pole—in front of his boss' home, which happens to be on his route.

Every now and then an Omar man runs into some sort of excitement along the route. In South Columbus, two Omar men noticed that an old lady on their route had suffered a stroke and saved her life by calling an ambulance. In Rodger's own home branch, another route man, Lawrence Manning, saved a family in a car stalled on a railroad crossing by sprinting down the track and stopping an approaching train. But, so far, nothing like this has ever happened to Rodger.

Most of his customers are young housewives. Occasionally they ask him to help move a heavy piece of furniture, or fasten a clothesline, but otherwise Rodger remains on the outside of the door.

He knows everyone by name and calls some of them by their first names—when it seems natural and expected. If he meets any of his hundreds of customers on the street he recognizes them instantly and addresses them by name. He also remembers birthdays and anniversaries, and slips in a reminder now and then about a "special" which may bring an order for extra pastry. Some of Rodger's best customers are families with children who take lunchboxes to school. Box lunches mean sandwiches which mean extra bread consumption. And a piece of pastry is the handiest desert.

Two out of three of his customers buy on credit and this gives Rodger the additional job of bill collecting. There are very few dead beats. During his six years with Omar, only six families have ever pulled out without paying him. But a certain percent of those who charge are slow and irregular in their payments and collecting these bills without offending the customers is one of Rodger's biggest problems. The company requires its drivers to limit deliveries to slow accounts till they have paid their bills. A "good as gold" is not a term of endearment but refers to a slow bill payer or doubtful credit risk.

In talking about his job, Rodger uses words which are familiar to other route men—but complete gobbledygook to anyone else. When he refers to a "pop-out," he means a chance customer who sees him or the truck and suddenly decides to buy something. If he calls someone a "pink," he isn't making a crack about politics. A pink to Rodger is a new customer who is registered on a duplicate route slip which is pink to distinguish it from the others. A "cripple" is simply a damaged cake or loaf of bread, which can't be sold and represents a loss to the driver who accepted it—unless he can show that it was the bakery's fault and not his own. "Gold Coast" is the delivery man's slang for an upper-middle class neighborhood with service entrances and servants to receive deliveries. A "cow-

boy" is a man who drives a truck as if he were riding a bucking bronco. The company tries to avoid cowboys.

One of the ways the Omar Company tries to spur the route men on to greater sales is to offer a whole catalogue of "prizes" which can be won on points based on sales. Rodger always has a few thousand points built up and keeps his copy of the prize catalogue handy in the living room. "I've got this in the bag if I want it," he says, pointing to a light meter. He'd like to improve his 8-mm. movie photography. But the catalogue is also full of stuff Rose or the children could use. Already the Smith place is full of prizes Rodger has won. They include the swing set and outdoor gym in the yard, a kiddy car, a red plastic easy chair, a set of dishes, cocktail glasses, a desk pen, a wall can opener, a tea kettle that whistles, a movie screen, a jig saw, a woolen sweater and a blouse. "Oh, yes," says Rodger, reaching in his pocket. "I almost forgot this pen and pencil set I won for being high in cakes last month."

Secret of Salesmanship

Though Rodger is a crackerjack salesman, he has no theories about it, except—"Just let 'em know they can depend on you, and you can depend on them."

Rodger's supervisor, Erwin Nuetcel, considers him a natural, and Rodger for his part says: "Actually I've got the best supervisor in the world. He treats me like a son. When a problem comes up on the route, he's as concerned as if it was his own and will go to any trouble to help."

When Rodger started working for Omar, he worked six days a week with six holidays. Then four years ago the drivers voted to joint the A. F. of L. teamster's union. The initiation fee is $30 and the dues are $4 a month. Since joining the union, the men have gotten more and more days off every year until now they have 36 days a year at full pay or commission plus Sundays and holidays. Drivers also get two weeks paid vacation after three years and three weeks vacation after 10 years. At one point the union insisted on a five-day week but gave up when the company pointed out that loss of Saturday sales would inevitably mean higher prices and lower commissions.

Relations between company and union have been friendly. "We've had no threat of a strike or walkout," says Rodger, "and I don't think we ever will." Rodger's only contact with union officials is the steward, who is a route man at his branch. He handles all grievances, but so far, Rodger hasn't had occasion to make any.

After their brief meeting in the morning at the plant, the route men scatter in different directions. When they get back they're tired and usually in a hurry to get home. Nevertheless, Rodger and the 40 other route men who work out of the North Side Branch have a community feeling based on the problems they share. All but five pay a dollar a month to belong to the North Branch Athletic Fund which Shorty Pyle, the North Branch manager, started a year or so ago to bring the men and their wives together at picnics, card parties and dances. Rodger is a member of a five-man committee which organizes these affairs.

The Minimum Money

The Smiths know where every penny is spent. Rodger takes care of the budgeting. Each week he gives Rose $20 for groceries and $15 for other expenses like milk. The total food bill runs about $35.

Rodger puts $50 a week in the checking account and this takes care of installment payments on the house and car, the phone, gas and electricity, garbage disposal, insurance, hospitilization policy, and various household bills.

Five dollars a week goes into the Credit Union —a savings account which the Smiths never touch unless they have to. "At Christmas time we've usually reached in for a little," says Rose. "But that's all."

"I figure I *have* to bring home $95 a week," says Rodger. "That's rock bottom."

On doctor bills the Smiths figure they've been lucky so far, having had no serious illnesses and no operations.

They spend very little on entertainment. At most they take in five or six movies a year. Even with their parties they don't buy more than two or three fifths of blended whisky a year. In the five years since they bought the TV set they've had two service calls totaling $31. Now the set is on the blink again—has been for a month or so. Rodger is afraid it'll need a new tube and doesn't know when they'll have it fixed. Certainly not till he gets the money to take care of a lot of other things first.

They've thought about different ways of saving on food bills. One year they tried growing their

own vegetables, but the birds got most of the seeds and the ground wasn't rich enough. Rodger decided that bringing in new top soil and fertilizer would have cost more than several years' vegetable crops. "Besides I've got enough to do just keeping the lawn in shape."

Till last year, Rodger managed to raise his income $500 each year. In 1953 he made $7,200. Last year (1954) he slipped back to $6,950. He figures that's the minimum he's got to have to live without some drastic changes in their family standard of living.

The big hurdle last year was a route cut—the second in Rodger's six years with the company. A slice of his territory was pared off to make a new route for a new salesman. That meant that Rodger had to work harder to create new customers which he did with the help of another salesman the company provided. Within a few weeks his volume was back to normal. The company also put a new surplus store in his territory, "and this didn't help at all." (The company denies that this store affected Smith's income. Chief reason for the drop, they say, was a cut in overtime pay to North American Aviation Corp. workers who populate the area.)

"Things were just a little tougher all over," says Rodger. The breadwinners on his route weren't bringing home the same overtime pay and Rodger felt this immediately in shorter orders, particularly on pastry.



"For the first time since we were married I've started thinking about a part-time job," says Rose. She figures she could help out in a department store or, since she had experience as a mail clerk, work in a post office.

"The first thing I'd have to give up is bowling," says Rodger. "Then, if things got worse, I'd have to quit paying that $5 a week into savings."

Rodger's Dream Income

Rodger's idea of a really satisfactory income is $12,000. With that kind of money he feels he could buy everything his family really needed or wanted, and save enough to tide them over almost any emergency. But that is still a dream rather than a practical goal.

"If I had it to do over, I'd take education a lot more seriously." In high school his consuming interest was sports. "I also fooled around with the drums a little. I had an uncle in Dover, N. J., who played drums professionally and whom I admired."

At the Mackensie High School in Detroit, Rodger started out with a college preparatory course, but flunked algebra and Latin and switched to a commercial course, typing and bookkeeping. "After the Army, I was all signed up at the State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. But I backed out because I preferred working and having a job and a car of my own.

"Now I could kick myself all over because I didn't work harder at the books and go to college. That would have made it a lot easier to make a living. If you can tell a company you've got two years of college, they figure you've got a little polish, even if you aren't exactly educated."

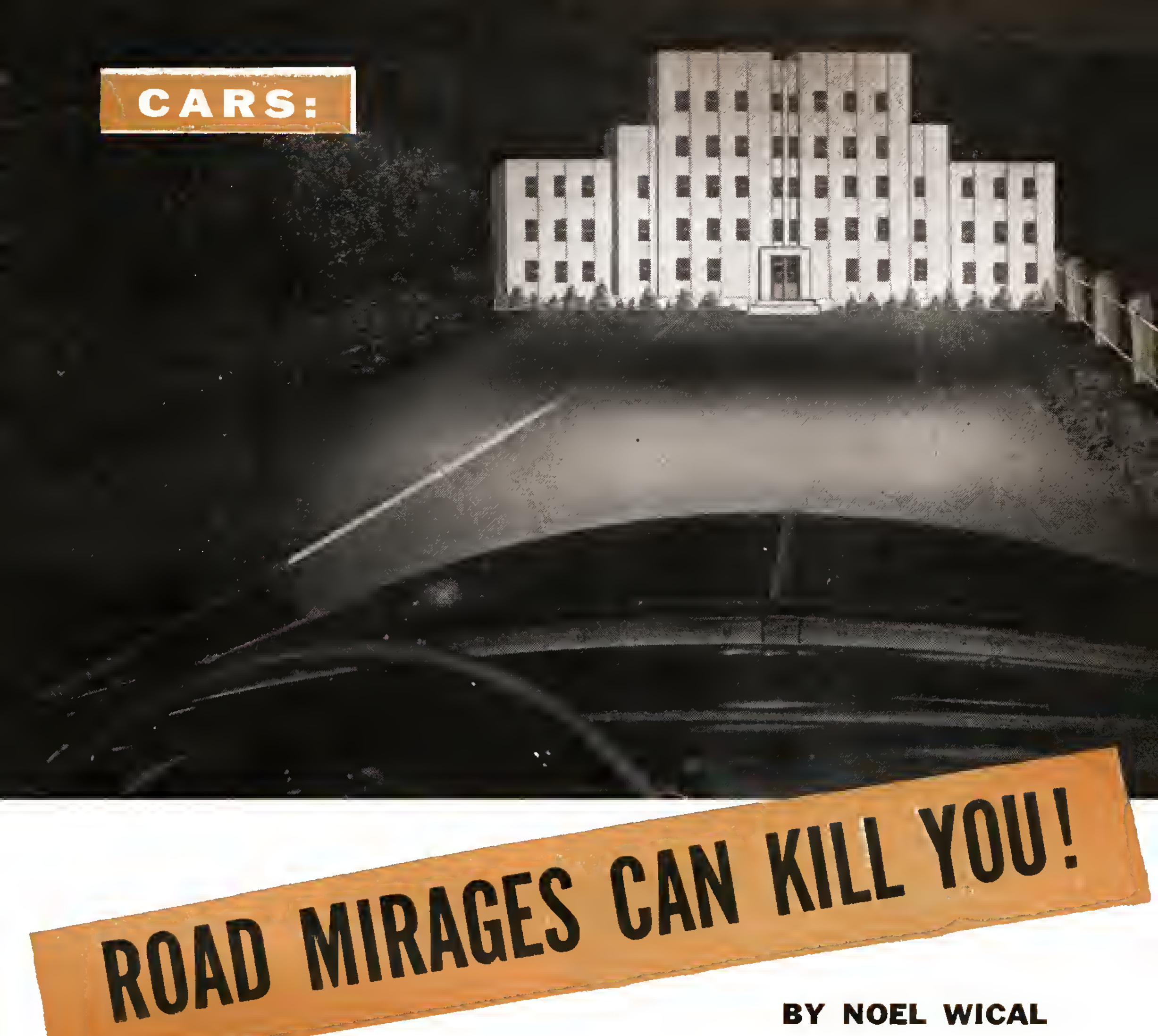
Rose keeps reminding him it still isn't too late to learn. "She's been after me to go to night school and study personnel work. But when I get home at night I sure don't feel like more work."

The Omar Company is expanding rapidly as new housing developments extend the market for its products. About one salesman in 33 is promoted to supervisor each year. While such a promotion would increase Rodger's security, it would not greatly increase his income. The next step—from supervisor to branch manager—is a far remoter possibility.

However, Rodger figures that the better you do with one company, the better you'll do with any company you might eventually join—and he's giving everything he's got to his present job.

"The bread route is tough, both mentally and physically," says Rodger, "but it's a good living. . . . Say, do you think the Indians have a chance this year?" —By John Kord Lagemann

(As this issue goes to press, we learn from Columbus that Smith's "dream" has become reality. He recently left Omar Company to take a job selling office equipment, at which he expects to make more than $10,000 a year.—Ed.)



ROAD MIRAGES CAN KILL YOU!

BY NOEL WICAL

An Illinois dentist, sober but tired, one night suddenly slammed on his brakes to avoid hitting a five-story building in the middle of the road. It could happen to you!

DANGER! GHOSTS AHEAD! If you saw a warning sign like this one flashing in your automobile headlights along a highway some night, you'd probably get a good laugh. Yet, there's plenty of hair-bristling evidence that such a sign might save your life.

For there *are* highway ghosts. Thousands of motorists see them at night. If you have never encountered a road phantom, your turn may be next. And it could kill you.

The "ghosts" are hallucinations, which victimize drivers when they are over-tired or worried. Scientists say the weird visions are as real to the driver experiencing them as concrete abutments. The experts define the visions as "hypnagogic hallucinations." In popular language, they're known as "moon mirages."

Hypnagogic hallucinations are simply hallucinations that occur when you are between being awake and being asleep. Leading safety investiga-

tors are beginning to conclude that they may explain many mysterious traffic accidents.

Here's how highway ghosts materialized for three drivers:

>> A New Mexico motorist, whose territory is the whole Southwest: "On one of those routes it is very flat and straight for long distances. One night after a lot of driving I suddenly saw sitting on the road a very large colonial mansion with an elaborate colonnade in front. I swerved sharply to the left to avoid hitting it, and woke up with my truck turning over in a gully 20 feet deep. It was a miracle I was alive. Then I realized I had gone asleep at the wheel, and the house wasn't there at all."

>> An Alabama driver: "One midnight I was driving up from Birmingham and I was really bushed. All of a sudden I saw, right in front of me, a tree growing out of the middle of the road. I slammed on the brakes and really scorched the tires. When I got out to look, there wasn't any tree."

>> In Illinois, a dentist was returning home late one night from a professional meeting. He was not only tired, but concerned about a building project in his town. Directly ahead in the road appeared the "project"—a new five-story medical-dental center. The dentist applied his brakes to keep his coupe from going through the revolving doors and into the lobby. When he looked again, the building had disappeared.

"Moon mirages" are likely to occur during night driving whenever you're sleepy, tired or worried. By learning to recognize the symptoms, you may save your life.

These and hundreds of similar "moon mirages" are being reported to one of the nation's top authorities on the subject. He is Professor Alfred L. Moseley, psychologist and research associate in industrial hygiene at Harvard University's well-known School of Public Health.

Professor Moseley demands more than second-hand reports and confidential letters for his ever-fattening file. He rides the nation's highways, gathering testimony from the drivers themselves.

The bespectacled 34-year-old professor conducts country-wide surveys, which also reach into Canada and Mexico. Working together on the research are psychologists, statisticians, engineers, physiologists, anthropologists and physicians. The research is supported financially by Harvard, the American Trucking Association, the National Association of Motor Bus Operators, the National Association of Automotive Mutual Insurance Companies and the U.S. Army.

But dollars and research alone won't help you. The causes of hallucinations and remedies for them, according to Professor Moseley, are so obvious that thousands of Americans go on disregarding them and, as a consequence, invite death to take charge of the steering wheel.

Fatigue, worry and strain—these are the villains.

"Really, the best remedy you can buy is the one most often ignored—sleep," says Professor Moseley. "It's amazing how many motorists neglect this cheapest safeguard of all. Get off the highway and get some rest. If you don't, you're heading right for the ditch—or worse.

"Let me give you an example. You notice a car wobbling ahead of you and you are sure the driver is drunk. Don't jump to conclusions. That driver may be just on the brink of sleep. He 'sees' the highway getting narrower and narrower. He is having trouble steering on it, the way a pedestrian has trouble walking straight on a chalk line, even when sober."

The "shrinking highway" is only one of many hallucinations that chase drivers off the road. For instance, a Massachusetts truck driver testifies:

"I've seen some mighty peculiar things on the road at night, but this takes the gold hubcap. I once saw a bridge ahead—but this bridge was *across* the road. There was no possible way to drive onto it.

"I stopped but there wasn't anything there. The cold night air sort of braced me up. I realized I'd been slipping toward sleep at the wheel."

A Cleveland librarian reports another brush with death. He was on vacation, driving his MG roadster on a non-stop run from Wisconsin to New York. Near Syracuse, long after midnight, a set of blazing headlights approached him on his side of the highway. He swung off to the side of the concrete to get out of the way. "I waited for that road-hog to pass by," the Cleveland man remembers. "He never came. The lights snapped off and everything was quiet. I walked up the pavement for a look. There was no other car around but mine.

"As I drove on, I got a bigger scare. Just 200 feet down the road was a washout. If the mirage had appeared a few seconds later, I would have pitched down the embankment and turned over."

When, in addition to sleepiness, you throw in worry and 20th-century tension, the driver's chances of hallucinations are greatly increased. For example, Professor Moseley got this first-hand account from a California truck driver:

"The other night I was coming into town and was having a terrible time keeping awake. All at once I saw lying across the road two big logs. I hit the brakes and the truck shook. After it stopped, I got out to look. Why, there weren't any logs!"

The driver told Professor Moseley that he had

been worrying over his troubles with a racketeer. The thug had once thrown timbers in the trucker's path and had threatened him since.

Another driver, who worries about a common highway hazard—hitting animals that wander across the pavement—sees mythical deer every time he drives through deer country at night. "It's funny," he says, "but I never see deer on the road until after I pass a 'Deer Crossing' sign, no matter how tired I am."

Just before sunrise, one night driver sometimes "sees" millions of giant red spiders crawling all over his windshield.

Those who see these strange sights often feel sheepish, or even guilty, later. A newspaperman from Wheeling, W. Va., while driving to California, saw an apartment house loom up in his path one night. "I almost felt like quitting my newspaper then and there and wiring my city editor that I couldn't see and report things straight any longer," he told friends afterward. Other victims of "H.H." sometimes question their own sanity.

All of these doubts and apprehensions that result from "moon mirages" can be dispelled if the victim will thumb through history, literature or medical records.

From ancient times onward, men have been puzzled by hallucinations. They appear without respect to a person's intelligence or station in life.

In classic Greece, Aristotle talked about these mental quirks. History records that Napoleon saw a throne on his bedroom ceiling long before he became emperor of France.

A veritable "census of hallucinations" was taken in England in the late 1800's. A Professor Henry Sidgwick compiled and published the results of a survey among 17,000 men and women of high education. He discovered that one out of 10 had experienced hallucinations not due to mental or physical illness or to drinking.

Dr. N. S. Yawger of Philadelphia has reminded psychologists that men of genius are known to have had either one or several hallucinations. "The phenomenon is just a state of mind and probably as far removed from disease or disorder as is dreaming," he wrote. A present-day psychiatrist described it as the last stand of the brain before sleep.

In the 1700's, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the usually clear-eyed German scholar, described a hallucination that puzzled and discomforted him. The poet said he once was strolling along a country lane and musing, when he saw walking toward him someone who looked familiar. Goethe gasped. For approaching him was the figure of Goethe himself!

So you are in good company if you have "H.H." However, the visions that astonished Goethe, on his quiet path, or stagecoach drivers on Queen Victoria's roads, were relatively harmless. They merely made lively conversation at Goethe's dinner table. But today, with traffic conditions as bad as they are, road visions can be lethal. Professor Moseley grimly notes that he has yet to develop a technique for interviewing motorists who fatally ended their travels while trying to dodge "moon mirages."

The emergency stops of frightened drivers, who were convinced they were cheating death, are scientifically explained by the professor. He says: "The lowered level of alertness, as a result of the fatigue and the repression of the wish to stop, combine to transform the wish into a situation which makes stopping a necessity." In other words, the driver needs to stop and dreams up a reason for doing it.

But you may be lucky enough to have preliminary warnings. Here are the symptoms:

1. You fail to recognize places with which you should be familiar.

2. You feel you have seen a certain place before, yet are positive you have never been there.

3. Signs or signals fail to register as they should. For example, you get no meaning from a sign with only the number "45" on it. Ordinarily you would recognize it as a speed limit.

When any of these things happen, beware. Hallucinatory barriers—or something worse—may lie ahead. You can try a smoke, or stop for a snack or for exercise. You can open the window for a gush of cool air. But the good effects from these, Professor Moseley cautions, may last only 10 minutes—and may actually prolong the problem.

Professor Moseley recommends "reasonably arranged" driving and resting schedules. He praises the Bureau of Motor Carriers of the Interstate Commerce Commission, which requires drivers to have eight hours off duty after 10 hours on. "This is intelligent practice," he says. "A wise motorist knows when to surrender to those enemies, fatigue, strain, worry."

A decorated, four-star Army general confided recently to the slight, exacting professor that he knew when to run up the white flag. Weary from conferences and hearings on military appropriations in Washington, the general took his automobile out of town on a weekend hunting holiday. On a remote stretch of road in the Chesapeake Bay country, a column of 28 jeeps—he counted them—passed in review in his headlights. He didn't need G-2 to tell him what was happening.

The general halted, took his sleeping bag off the back seat, stuffed himself in and napped. His own "intelligence" had identified the column—"moon mirage."

—By Noel Wical

man around the house . . .

BY JOHN SHARNIK

Budget ideas for fixing up that basement room • Economical substitute for bath tiles • Streamlined kitchen appliances • New patterns in floor tiling

CAVE is the French word for cellar—and a lot of modern architects have no more use for one than the other. "If I wanted to live in a dark, wet, underground room," one architect told me recently, "I'd find myself a ready-made hole in the side of a cliff, instead of going to all the expense of digging one."

That attitude, however, doesn't help us guys who've got cellars and who need the extra space a cellar provides. What we want to know is how to make the basement fit to use—as a bar, game room, TV hangout or downstairs den.

As it happens, some people *have* been doing a little headwork on this subject. To cope with the problem of dampness, which makes a good many cellars unfit for any use, chemists have been tinkering with silicones—the screwball synthetics that are related to glass, that look like a solid but often act like liquid.

Silicones have been used to form a tough invisible coating—stainproof and waterproof—on just about everything from cotton to steel. And now they form the base for masonry paints, to be swabbed on brick, stone or concrete foundation walls.

Silicone paint won't dam any underground brook that happens to run right through your basement. Nothing will, except maybe digging a channel, to divert the stream around your foundation walls, and lining it with drainage tile. But silicones seem to be the best all-round solution yet found for such normal moisture problems as rain seepage. You can find out about the paint by consulting a local mason or masonry supply dealer.

Underground living: Granted a reasonably dry cellar, you can give it the look and feeling of a room, instead of a power plant, without using an expensive parlor kind of finish.

For the walls, especially concrete-block walls, this can be a matter of nothing more than a good coat of paint. If you want to get fussy, of course, you can fur out the walls and face them with hardboard or plywood. If you use hardboard, be sure it is *tempered* (which makes it more damp-proof). Also, look into the various plastic-surfaced hardboards now on the market in a variety of solid colors and rugged patterns. If your choice is plywood, keep in mind the prefinished panels now available in grooved form, resembling random-width planking. The grooving makes it possible to set one panel (up to 4′ x 8′ each) next to another without any visible joints. The stuff is available in a variety of hardwood surfaces.

Overhead. The problem in finishing a basement ceiling, of course, is to conceal the raw guts of BX cables, ducts or steampipes, and rough cross-ties between the flooring joists. Lately, I've come across several solutions to real low-budget ingenuity.

One guy I know made a complete basement-room ceiling out of bamboo window blinds, available from department stores. He just nailed up the blinds so they hung in loops—and some of the loops concealed steam pipes, BX, etc. Another underground genius pulled the same stunt with big sheets of canvas in a basement bar and game room fitted out with a lot of nautical paraphernalia that he uses and collects as an amateur sailor.

But for low cost, you probably can't beat the scheme advanced by interior designer Richard Guthrie. He did it with paint: a light, bright color on the narrow edges of the joists; flat black on everything between them—ducts, cables, ties and the wide sides of the beams themselves. All the unsightly stuff melts into a shadow. The net effect is that of an even, striped ceiling.

Wall Wonder. Ever since I got the bill for a new bathroom, some months back, I've been on the watch for economical substitutes for wall tile. One that ought to meet the requirements both of the style-conscious wife and the boy who pays the bills is a heavy, semi-rigid plastic called Panlam, which comes in sheets up to 4′ x 8′.

Each sheet is a kind of transparent vinyl sandwich, with a visible pressed-in filling of burlap, glass-fiber, fabric or other material that forms a pattern as interesting as almost any expensive wallpaper. But unlike wallpaper, this stuff resists stains and water—which makes it fine for kitchens and bathrooms. Your wife can wash off the splatter marks or the kids' crayon drawings with soap and water.

A 4′ x 8′ sheet of Panlam costs—for most of the patterns—from about $13.50 to $15. It can be applied to plywood, plaster or wallboard with rubber-based contact-bond cement. Details at local craft and hobby shops, or write Polyplastex, Inc., 441 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y.

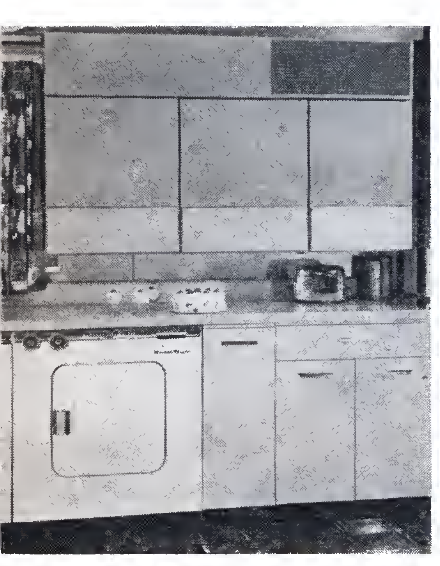
Streamlining. A couple of months ago I tipped those of you whose *Fraus* were plugging for a modernized kitchen on an increasing trend in appliances—the trend toward built-ins. Two of the most streamlined examples of this trend have just been put on the market. One is a combination refrigerator-freezer (General Electric) that hangs from the wall at eye-level, like a kitchen cabinet. It uses a new thin-wall insulation, has three cabinet-type doors that close with magnetic catches. Looks, in fact, like a trio of average-sized wall cabinets, side by side.

The other radical departure in the kitchen end of household engineering is a fold-away electric stove (Frigidaire). It consists of a set of surface burners (the oven is separate) that rest on the counter top when in use, afterwards fold up (with automatic shut-off) into the wall like a Murphy bed, thus freeing counter space for other use.

Underfoot. Any of you do-it-yourself types who've been working out on floor-tiling are probably used to the familiar checkerboard pattern of asphalt, linoleum, rubber or plastic square tiles.

If you or whoever draws the plans around your place) are thinking of any future flooring projects, you've got new possibilities for something a little off-beat.

These possibilities are opened by Robbins Geometile, which puts out diamond-shaped, six-sided and eight-sided tiles. They can be combined into a variety of patterns, and in ways that can make a room look longer or wider than it actually is. They're available at most stores selling floor-coverings.








LEATHER



The Bullet That Two-Gun BILL HART SHOT

BY ERIC ST. CLAIR

NEWT KASHKASHIA and I used to plan to get out to Signal Hill every Saturday to hunt Indians or to chase cattle rustlers, but generally something came up to keep him home. His people were Armenian and they had a ranch near Fresno, but they spent their winters in Long Beach selling raisins and dried figs in a store they had. On Saturdays there'd always seem to be a ton or two of raisins that Newt had to weigh out into one-pound bags. All that Mr. Kashkashia had to do was point and blow a little through his black mustache, and Newt and I would give up any plans we'd made. For his size, Mr. Kashkashia was as fierce a man as I have ever seen.

But this Saturday was different. Maybe the ton of raisins had not come in, maybe Mr. Kashkashia just took pity on us; anyhow, here we were, tromping through the grass on Signal Hill, headed for the quarry.

We'd been hiking like Indians, hunched over and with our feet pointed straight ahead, stepping carefully so as not crack any twigs—but there were no twigs in that lush grass, and I could see that Newt was getting tired of being Indians and nothing happening. He straightened up. "Look!" he yelled. "Rustlers! Head 'em off at the draw!"

This was more like it. He sprang into the saddle of his black mustang and I piled onto my palomino named Pedro. Off we galloped whooping and hollering so the rustlers would know we were coming and give us a good run. We were still going strong when we got to the quarry, but what we saw down in it knocked the rustlers clean out of our minds.

That old quarry had always been there, always deserted the way quarries generally are, and it was still deserted—but sometime during those weeks we had been sacking raisins a town had sprouted on its floor. Not just any old kind of a town, mind you, but a special town, the sort of a town that was exactly what we had been wanting.

It was a genuine and absolutely authentic Wild West town, with a general store and an assay office and three saloons, all of them with hitching rails to tie your horse to. And every bit of it was ours! At least, nobody else was there claiming it.

For a time we could only stare, then without a word we plunged down the slope for a closer look at our town. We reined up before the Last Chance Bar and slid off our cayuses. I slapped my Stetson against my chaps and my spurs jingled. Newt tugged at his vest and fingered his guns to make sure they'd be easy on the draw, and he spit on his solid-gold SHERIFF badge and polished it with his elbow.

With our narrowed eyes as cold as steel we shouldered the saloon door open and swaggered through. There was nothing inside. There wasn't even a back wall to the saloon, or a roof. Newt stiffened with surprise, but I was more sophisticated.

I saw at once that our find was even more wonderful than we had first thought. The Kashkashias, you understand, were deeply religious in a religion that hated and feared the motion-picture theater. In his whole life Newton Kashkashia had never seen a movie. I had. I'd been going to movies every night, twice on Sundays, ever since I had been old enough to carry a five-cent piece. I knew a movie set when I saw one.

That was what this town was, a movie set. On this very spot perhaps the great Bill Hart himself had stood, leveling his guns to drill the villain. In a hushed voice I explained matters to Newt. He nodded; he knew all about Bill Hart from me and from the other kids. "Like this," he said tightly. "Bang bang!"

It's funny, but in that moment my Armenian friend, Newton Kashkashia was the spit and image of William S. Hart. And I remembered how once Newt had fought with the neighborhood tough. Newt hated fighting, but that kid had had it coming to him for a long time. It was a dirty job, but Newt had done what had to be done, and in true Bill Hart style.

It came to me then why Newt was my best friend. He was Bill Hart, that's who he was, scaled down a bit, but Bill Hart all the same.

Bill Hart—why, it must be an omen!

Outside in the street I stared hard at the buildings while Newt watched silently. "You know," I said finally. "I think I saw the picture they made here. It *was* a Bill Hart picture, I think."

We practically pulled off our caps and bowed our heads in reverence. Somewhere in that dust was the holy print of Bill Hart's boot, if only we could find and identify it. But it was hard to do. The dust was pretty well kicked up, and what prints we did find could have been made by anybody.

Then Newt yelled. He had found a brass cartridge shell, empty. We both put it to our noses and sniffed; Newt claimed he smelled powder, though I couldn't detect it myself.

"Bill Hart shot that bullet," Newt said. "Two-Gun Bill Hart himself!" I nodded; you could tell by looking at it that it was a Bill Hart bullet. Round and smooth it was, and mighty businesslike. There wasn't the shadow of a doubt of it.

Newt's handkerchief wasn't any too clean so he borrowed mine which was still sort of fresh from Tuesday morning, to wrap the bullet. A bullet that Bill Hart had shot was worthy of the best.

I watched Newt put it in his pocket. He had found it, and it was his bullet all right, but I would gladly have chopped off my right arm at the elbow for a Bill Hart bullet to put in *my* pocket. We looked and looked for one for me, kicking around until we were dusty to our knees, but it wasn't any use. Bill Hart never wasted his shots; one was all he generally needed to straighten things out.

I brushed some of the dust off myself and wiped sweat out of my eyes. "Let's eat," I said. "There's only the one." I think we had raisins and figs for lunch but I was too full of Bill Hart to notice how they tasted. Newt kept wrapping and unwrapping his bullet and asking me about whether he ought to get some reliable kind of brass polish to shine it up with, or whether it might not be better to leave it the way he had found it. More respectful.

"I better shine her up good," he decided finally, and I agreed with him. "If I let her go she'll turn all green. I'll shine her every Saturday. You can help."

Again my heart warmed to Newt. He was a real pal; another fellow might have kept Bill Hart's bullet to himself, but Newt was generous.

Mr. Kashkashia forced a double handful of raisins on me when I left Newt at the store. I didn't want the raisins of course, but whatever Mr. Kashkashia told me to do I did. I was afraid to throw them away even after I'd got out of his sight, so I ate them and wished I hadn't. They were so sweet they made my teeth hurt.

We never got to go back to our Wild West town. Instead, we sacked raisins. "My dad," Newt explained. "He don't like bullets and he don't like the movies. He says I can keep the bullet though—only I got to work for it, every Saturday." It wasn't my bullet, of course; it was Newt's, but I had a sort of interest in it and so I helped out. We sacked so many raisins on those Saturdays that I am still sick of raisins, but every week regular we polished that bullet until it hurt our eyes to look at it. Bill Hart would have been proud of us.

And then, on the last Friday of the school year I really did see the movie that had been shot in our Wild West town. I still remember the shock.

I yield to nobody in my admiration for Fatty Arbuckle and Buster Keaton and Al St. John. I saw every picture they ever put out and they made me laugh until my face ached. But they cannot be mentioned alongside of William S. Hart.

Well, the movie that had been made on Signal Hill was a movie with Fatty Arbuckle in it and Buster Keaton and Al St. John. I got sicker and sicker as I recognized each building and slowly realized that Newt's bullet was not a Bill Hart bullet at all. It was a mere Fatty Arbuckle bullet. How could I ever face Newt again?

They were leaving for Fresno tomorrow night and I was supposed to help them pack. I knew something now that would make Newt feel cheap if he knew, but it would be only fair for me to tell him. He ought to know; I'd have to tell him because he'd never find out any other way—he never saw any movies.

I was pretty quiet while we worked, and after we were done Newt opened up the cigar box he kept things in and brought out the bullet and the well-worn cake of brass polish. Now was the time to tell him, *now.* I took a breath. "Newt—" I began in a small voice.

"Ray," said Newt. "You've been a good pal, and I know you'd like this." He held the bullet out to me.

I backed off, shaking my head.

"My dad," Newt went on, "he says I can keep it because I earned it. But I know he don't like it around. So I'll give it to you. We'll look at it together when I come back next fall." He cradled the bullet in his hand, gazing at it. And once more the look on my Armenian friend's face was pure Bill Hart, Bill Hart patting the shoulder of the girl he'd saved from the rustlers, sending her back to the man she'd been engaged to. Giving her up. "Take it," he said, holding it out to me.

I still have the bullet. We moved away from Long Beach that summer and I never saw Newt again. Being just kids, we never wrote to each other. I take the bullet out once in a while and shine it up. It's still bright enough to be a genuine Bill Hart bullet—but it isn't.

I wish it was. —By Eric St. Clair

How Italy's Government Lets Heroin Flood the U.S.

Continued from page 31

probably live in exclusive neighborhoods, are church-goers, and very likely send their daughters to expensive private schools. And the dope money sweated out by 17-year-old school kids from New York to Los Angeles pays for it all.

As customs officials have come to realize, today's narcotics bosses have also made a switch in smuggling methods. In the past, the practice was to stake everything on a few large contraband shipments entrusted to professionals. The new wrinkle is to spread the goods among a large number of casuals such as seamen, GI's and even tourists bent on picking up a few bucks by delivering a small package to a certain address.

How does it work? Take the Case of the Industrious Professor. It started with a tip-off: At night furtive figures were slipping through the iron-barred gate of the darkened Schiapparelli plant in Turin—the one which had done such remarkable business with R.A.M.S.A.-Dr. Baccarani. (This Schiapparelli is not the famed cosmetics firm.)

Federal narcotics agents drew a beat on the most regular visitor, a bushy-haired Italian 30 years of age, named Egidio Calascibetta. Odd, Calascibetta was forever riding the trains to Genoa and Naples, two of the biggest dope ports.

One of the American agents made Calascibetta's acquaintance in a train compartment. A beautiful friendship developed. The American let on he was in the rackets, and so did Calascibetta. The talk switched to heroin. Could Calascibetta tell where it could be had? You bet he could. You didn't have to go farther than Calascibetta himself.

On the night of February 15, 1953, the Italian handed the agent a two-pound sample in a car parked two blocks from the walled-in Schiapparelli plant. Arrested, Calascibetta gave away the works. He was buying the stuff from Professor Carlo Migliardi, technical director and number two man in the Schiapparelli firm. Professor—because he had formerly taught chemistry at the Milan University.

Professor Migliardi took the rap like a man. He had sold dope to Calascibetta knowing full well that Calascibetta was no pharmacist or physician. The stuff, said the Professor, was the work of his own deft hands. He'd manufactured it all on his own after hours in the plant's laboratories. The rest of the management was in the clear, he swore, since he had acted behind their backs. In the past three years he had sold through Calascibetta and other go-betweens, the fantastic amount of 850 pounds of 98% heroin, all of which found its way into the U. S.—an $85 million deal.

Pending an investigation, the Health Commissioner closed the Schiapparelli plant. Turin police announced that examination of records had shown "the firm had been lax in its internal control of narcotics."

The Health Commissioner disagreed. He found the records models of precision. In particular they showed that "the firm was not responsible for Professor Migliardi's operations." So after a three-week shutdown, Schiapparelli was licensed to make heroin again.

On March 11, 1953, the New York *Herald Tribune* reported from Rome that "a fight is brewing between the Italian police and high government authorities over the disposition of the Schiapparelli case."

The chief beneficiary of this fight seems to have been Professor Migliardi. Out on bail, he has been back on the job at Schiapparelli. More than two years have passed and there is no sign that his case will ever go on trial.

However, a new chapter in the Schiapparelli case is being written. On March 1, 1955, the Rome Ministry of the Interior ordered the plant to stop production of narcotics for the time being. Stocks on hand were confiscated. The reason given: Black-market dealings.

It is significant, and not at all surprising, that the Italian press never breathed a word of this. Nor were there any prior news stories telling how and why Schiapparelli had got into hot water again.

In the spring of 1953, the heroin-makers were attacked from a new quarter. The World Health Organization, a United Nations subsidiary, demanded a world-wide ban on the manufacture and medical use of heroin. As a result, the United Nations took up the matter, and on June 23 signed the so-called "New York Protocol of 1953" banning heroin altogether.

In Italy any physician or druggist can buy heroin as easily as aspirin.

What Makes Dad a Great Man?



I teach history to the seventh and eighth grades at Roosevelt Intermediate School in Wichita, Kansas. Each year I confront my students with this question: "Who, in your opinion, was the greatest person who ever lived?" This survey of an average of 225 students between the ages of 13 and 16 has for three consecutive years placed Jesus first, Lincoln second, and Washington third. (For some reason women are seldom listed.)

Each year I am happy to read several replies which simply say, "My Dad is the greatest." Those fathers should be proud. Quite naturally the question arises, "What are the qualities that Dad possesses to make him rank so high?" Well, I put it to 208 students. The consensus listed five main attributes in this order: that made Dad a great guy. They are:

1. Dad is understanding. When we have a problem, he is ready to listen. He will be patient and kind in his response.

2. Dad is interested in the same things we are. He shares his recreation with us.

3. Dad has a good sense of humor. He's loads of fun to be with.

4. Dad loves us.

5. He is fair with our allowance.

—By Robert O'Rourke

The protocol shortly became law in most of the United Nations. Five countries which had been importing small amounts of heroin for experimental purposes decided on a total ban: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Canada and Finland. The combined heroin use of these nations had never exceeded 15-20 pounds a year, nor had any of them ever contributed to the dope traffic.

Italy's representatives, too, had signed the New York Protocol, just as they had in 1925, 1931 and 1946 when similar agreements were adopted. These earlier covenants were designed to outlaw the international traffic in heroin by banning its manufacture and export except for small quantities to be used medically—the framers of the agreements evidently being under the impression that the narcotic has some medical value.

As in the past, the Italian government is again dragging its feet when it comes to honoring its signature. The 1953 New York Protocol was submitted to the Italian Parliament as a matter of routine—and promptly buried. "The long delay is giving underworld forces the chance for obstructive efforts," the *Herald Tribune* commented on November 30, 1954.

It has been suggested that the U. S. government may be negotiating secretly with Italy on heroin. This writer knows, from our embassy people in Rome and from Interpol's Dr. Dosi, that the Italians are being reminded frequently of their failure to try really to do something about the heroin situation. But this has been going on practically since the end of World War II. The pressures have occasionally had their tiny successes—such as the arrest now and then of some U. S.-bound smuggler at the Rome-Ciampini airport, the partial shutdowns of the narcotics factories, and Italian officials' statements that they were going to investigate the situation. Without the American pressure, weak though it is, the situation would no doubt be even worse.

But as far as can be determined, at no time have there been any definite negotiations between U. S. and Italian representatives about heroin. If there have been, they deserve a prize for the vaguest diplomatic palavers in history.

Some people suspect that certain bureaucratic elements in Washington who like their narcotics commission jobs, safaris to exotic places on expense accounts, and the thrill of posing as thugs in waterfront dives, fail to make the facts clear to other government agencies and to the public.

Certainly a really tough Washington ultimatum to Italy could stop the whole sickening, festering business.

Unless that happens, many, many more thousands of American teenagers are beyond question going to become physical and moral wrecks because of heroin addiction.

"The situation," says Narcotics Commissioner Anslinger, "is out of control."

—By Henry Jordan

A BLUEBOOK BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

The Day the Century Ended

BY FRANCIS IRBY GWALTNEY



The Day the Century Ended

BY FRANCIS IRBY GWALTNEY

In that serene and happy town he seemed to have entered adult life with all the gifts that fortune could bestow—health, money, security, and a beautiful, intelligent, passionately responsive wife. Then, like a lightning flash ending a dream, came the sustained, shattering horror that would awake him to the world.



Book I

By Their Deeds

I AWOKE A FEW MINUTES before dawn. My guard was snoring raucously and his rifle was about to fall from his lap. Sleeping on guard duty had been a serious enough offense in the days of the National Guard army; it was doubly serious now in the army of the likes of Colonel Miles.

"Hey!" I called softly. "Hey!" The exertion of speech, even now when my bruised head was almost well, caused a faint throb in my temples.

The guard, such a young, innocent-looking boy, recoiled quickly and grabbed his rifle to keep it from falling.

"Your relief's coming."

My guard straightened himself, rubbed the sleep out of his eyes, and hastened to the entrance of the guard tent. I heard the Sergeant of the Guard grumbling at his detail. My guard, still accustomed to training-camp discipline, obsequiously held the tent flap open for the sergeant's entrance. The sergeant, Kenny Carr, grinned.

"Morning, Sam," he said.

"Who went to sleep first? Him or you?" He caught the boy's start from the corner of his eye.

"He didn't bat an eye all night."

The boy appeared startled, then relieved, then puzzled by me.

"Glad to hear it," Kenny said. "He'd be taking your place if I'd a caught'im even blinking."

And the boy believed him.

"Taking my place?" I said. "You got some news?"

Carr seated himself, after pushing my chained feet aside, on my bunk. "That hurt you?"

"Damn right! Take it easy. Circulation's cut off."

"Sorry, Sam," Kenny murmured.

"What about that news?"

"Well—it's news, all right, but I don't know whether you'll call it good. They ain't sending you to the stockade."

"That's good news."

"Guess so," Kenny said. "Ray Mosby talked to Colonel Miles, told'im what a fine young man you are and all. Ended up that they decided to send you to George Company."

"Oh." I had heard of George Company of course. And I had heard of its commanding officer, Captain Grimes.

George Company certainly wasn't something to which I could look forward. Convict companies had been abolished decades ago when penologists' protests had finally stopped the practice of taking volunteers from American prisons and putting them into suicide regiments. If they survived, it meant that they had paid adequately for their crimes. But there was still George Company. And the difference between George and those nineteenth-century outfits was not too great. The difference was the source of the men for the company. And they weren't volunteers.

Carr dug into his cargo pockets for a ring of keys. He unlocked my chains, carefully keeping me from seeing his eyes while he worked, and helped me to my feet.

"That son!" he said, meaning Colonel Miles.

"That's right." I flexed my legs gently. The sudden release of new blood into my feet caused them to throb and sting.

"Can you walk yet?"

I lurched to my feet and tried a step before I nodded.

I was marched to regimental headquarters, which was in a squad tent erected in the shade of a huge mango tree, where a sleepy major, sleepers still in the corners of his eyes, sat on an empty ammunition case. The major, a Regular Army officer who had been transferred to this regiment not long after the arrival of Colonel Miles, received Carr's salute and frowned at me.

"This is"—he looked at a slip of paper he held in his hand—"Samuel F. Gifford?"

"Yessir," Carr said.

"Stand at attention, Gifford," the major said.

"They had'im chained up, Major," Carr said quickly. "His legs is stiff."

"Oh," the major said. "Well, try to do better than you're doing now. The Colonel wants a soldierly appearance."

I tried.

"All right, Gifford," the major said. "According to the Articles of War, you ought to be in front of a firing squad right now, but Colonel Miles went to bat for you, just like he always does when an enlisted man gets into trouble."

I thought, And when he's afraid of what General Hix will say about there being too many courts-martial.

"Now I don't know—or care—whether you appreciate it or not, but I want you to know that the Colonel has been very generous with you. He has offered you a choice. You can go to the stockade in Manila and await transfer to Leavenworth, or you can go to George Company as a buck private. What's your choice?"

"George Company, sir."

"That's playing it smart, Gifford," the major said.

Colonel Miles was waiting. The Colonel was five feet six inches tall. His skin was pink and stretched taut by the fat beneath it. Above his soft little mouth was a military mustache, a gray line seemingly drawn by a make-up expert straight across his upper lip. But the mustache failed to lend strength to the mouth, no matter how fond its hopeful sponsor had been of its possibilities. His round little belly protruded enough so that it touched the edge of his field desk. The hands were small and, unlike the pink face, quite white. On the third finger of his left hand was a ring which signified his graduation from the United States Military Academy. Behind him and to his right was a hat-rack, which his orderly had carried from one place to the next as regimental headquarters was moved, and upon it hung a battered campaign hat, the Colonel's "trademark."

The Colonel was smiling benignly.

I came to attention in front of his desk and removed my fatigue cap.

"Salute, soldier," the major, behind me, said. "You're back in the army."

I saluted and said, "Private Gifford reporting to the Regimental Commander, sir."

Colonel Miles returned the salute. "Welcome back to the Army, uh—"

"Gifford, sir," I said.

"Ah yes, welcome back to the army, Gifford." His voice was quite tenor and somewhat husky from many years of shouting military commands. Probably, I thought, the man had once been the victim of many a rough joke about his tenor voice. He leaned back in his swivel chair and crossed his arms over his head. "Gillum," he began, his sharp tone succeeding only in making his voice higher, "there are some excellent soldiers in George Company. During the two island campaigns they saved this regiment, and more than once too. They spearheaded both landings."

How would you know? I thought; you weren't there.

"At the present they're holding the most important sector of our line and doing a good job of it too. You should be proud to be associated with such an organization."

"Yessir," I said.

"Uh"—Colonel Miles looked questioningly at the major—"was there anything else, Major?"

The major hurried around the desk and whispered in the Colonel's ear. I saw what might have been muscle in the Colonel's jaw bulge like a pulse. He frowned and looked at me with something akin to hatred showing in his eyes.

"Thank you, Major," he murmured. "Gillum, I understand that you were the late General Cozzens' son-in-law."

"Yessir."

Colonel Miles rolled the Academy ring around his finger. His eyes twinkled. "Well," he said happily, "I do hope you have better luck than your late father-in-law."

You dirty dog, I thought. "Thank you, sir."

"All right, Gillum. Major Read will give you your papers and secure transportation to George Company. That's all." Still smiling, he dropped his eyes to his desk.

I saluted, made about-face, and marched out of the tent, conscious of the major's step directly behind me. A jeep and a driver were waiting. The major handed me an 8½ x 11 manila envelope, which contained a record of my military career, and led me by the arm to the jeep. The driver examined me closely.

"Get in," the major said. He beckoned to Carr, who handed him an M-1 rifle. "You won't cause any trouble with this, will you?" he asked doubtfully.

"Nosir," I said. I took the rifle and placed it between the driver's seat and mine.

The major tossed a bandoleer of clipped ammunition to the driver. "The driver'll give you the bandoleer when you're out of our perimeter." He nodded to the driver.

The driver and I both saluted.

"Take him away," the major said.

I waved to Carr, who gave me the thumb-and-forefinger sign, and the scene disappeared behind the cloud of dust from the wheels of the jeep.

2

WE DROVE PAST the ammo dump, past the Negro truck company, past Service Company and over a Bailey Bridge. The sun was up now and the Filipinos were going to the rice paddies. Several of them gave us the V-sign and the children, most of whom were burdened with farming equipment, grinned and yelled, "Geeve me wan seegarette, Joe." The driver drove slowly to prevent the dust from choking them. After we passed the Filipinos they continued

to call after us; it was so peaceful that it made my throat thicken.

Less than three weeks ago I had been with the Recon Platoon when we had moved into this little town. The Japs had deserted it as we advanced, but Colonel Miles hadn't been convinced that they weren't still there. It was difficult to prove to Colonel Miles that there were no Japs around. It had taken the unnecessary death of Raker, Meleski, Saunders and Ralston to convince him of that much. Those four men, who would never have been my friends if the war hadn't brought us together, had died uselessly, but that hadn't been important to Colonel Miles.

And that had been only three weeks ago. I was thinking, as we drove along, that the yesterdays of a war are years ago in the civilian's measure of time. Twenty-or-so days ago, and it already seemed as if it had happened when I was a young man.

Once safely beyond the last outpost of spit-and-polish regimental headquarters, the driver, who had until now faced impassively ahead, removed his helmet and replaced it with a crumpled fatigue cap, which he took from one of his cargo pockets.

He was quite tall, this driver, and when he changed headgear I saw that his hair was very short, blond and kinky. Now, after glancing back to see that it was safe to treat me civilly, he grinned and revealed a solid row of teeth which were stained by tobacco. His hands were long, so long that the steering wheel seemed small and frail when he gripped it. He was hawk-faced and gawky. His face and neck were burned to a leathery brown from so much sun. He looked, it occurred to me, like a sharecropper instead of a George Company jailbird. He tossed the bandoleer of ammunition into my lap, took a chew of tobacco, and said:

"Hell, go 'head and shoot somebody if'n you feel like it. I don't keer." Then he added: "Anybody but me."

It would have been impossible for somebody from Gray's Landing to doubt his accent. "You must be one of the old Guardsmen."

"That's right." He spat, neatly so the wind wouldn't throw it back on us. "How about you?"

"Headquarters Company, Gray's Landing."

He gave me a quick glance that revealed the animosity the men in the line companies felt for us and our often soft jobs in Headquarters Company. "Walnut Creek," he said. George Company had originally come from Walnut Creek.

"You mean you're not . . ." I stopped, embarrassed.

"Hell no! I ain't no foul-up."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I didn't mean . . ."

"'S all right," he said. He offered his hand. "Willie Crawford."

"Sam Gifford." I said. I was certain now that he was a sharecropper. During the past few years I had come to like these people and know them as my friends, and the accent and manners of his kind had never been more welcome than they were now. I shook hands with him.

"Gifford, huh?"

I nodded. "Sam Gifford."

He pondered a moment. "Any kin to the Gifford that run a gin in Gray's Landing?"

"He's my father," I said. "Did you know him?"

"Yeah," he said, "I knowed'im." He spat and paused a moment before he went on. "Fact is, he knows me well enough to call me by name when he sees me." He chewed his tobacco twice. "Pretty good man. You'd 'a' never knowed he was rich."

"He isn't rich." I said stiffly.

"He ain't no poor white."

"No, but he isn't rich either."

Willie suddenly grinned. Then he laughed. "I didn't go to hurt your feelings." He waved at a Filipino who gave us the V-sign. "Coming from an important family, how come you ain't an officer?"

I smiled. "I don't know," I said truthfully.

"Well," Willie drawled easily, "I guess living ain't *all* sweetness'n light, huh?" When he said huh, he poked me in the ribs with his elbow.

I laughed. "Not much." And I thought with some surprise, This man could've easily been one of Poppa's sharecroppers.

Willie grinned with the easy satisfaction that comes when a sharecropper unexpectedly finds a person with whom he can converse on even terms.

"Yep," he said, "not much sweetness'n light around this God-forsaken outfit." He spat. And, safe with the knowledge that he could talk to me, went on. "'S getting so you don't see so many of the old Guardsmen no more. Most of 'em's been wounded'n sent home or killed—or something."

"How many original Guardsmen are there left in George Company?"

"One. I'm it." He spat. "When the Japs bombed us that time, me'n another guy's the only ones that wasn't killed or wounded real bad. I'm the only enlisted man in the company't ain't a foul-up."

"Are they *all* jailbirds?"

Willie looked at me and shook his head. "Not a man in the company's ever been in a civilian jail. Every one of'em's been sent to us by the courts-martial." Willie spat again. "We'n all get along all right in civilian life. It's the Army we can't get along with, so they shove us all out to George." I liked him for automatically including himself with the men who had been court-martialed.

Comfortably friends now, we rode for a few moments without speaking. I took a drink from his canteen, which tasted of tobacco juice, and slumped in the seat to enjoy the sunshine.

"What're they sending you to George for?" Willie asked abruptly.

"For doing like the man said, striking an officer under combat circumstances."

"What kind of officer?"

"Regular Army."

"Hurt'im bad?"

"I damn near killed him."

"Should a shot'im," Willie said. "That way you'd a been pretty sure of killing'im."

It was a fine morning. We drove along the banks of the Angat River and while Willie attended to his driving, I watched the Filipino women do their laundry in the cool-looking shallows next to the shore. Occasionally a woman passed on her way to the river. They carried their laundry on their heads. They were so graceful that they reminded me of the paintings Gauguin had done elsewhere in the Pacific. Here on the peaceful banks of a clear, swift river, it was hard to remember combat, death and eyes opened wide by the sight of death.

I said, "Is the front pretty quiet?"

"Yeah," Willie said, "if you want to call it a front, it's quiet. All they is up there's a line of outposts about a mile apart. Them Japs could walk right into Manila and nobody'd know it till it's all over."

Some of the old fear was returning now. The three weeks I had had under the care of Doc Wingate and his drugs had done a lot to restore pieces of what had been Sam Gifford during the early days of the war, but fear is malignant and after its damage is done repairs are impossible. It is somewhat like leprosy—it can be arrested by relief, but can't be entirely cured.

Willie stopped the jeep on a knoll and pointed ahead. "See that potato hill up yonder?" he said. "That's our first outpost. See that long hogback that drops off so sharp—shaped sort of like a pipe and stem? That's another outpost. That sharp drop off's where it hits the river. On most a them hills, we got outposts, six of 'em anyhow. And one platoon's got to take care of all of 'em. Little Joe Johnson's bunch stays around to guard the captain, Captain Grimes."

Willie pointed toward a clump of mango trees on the bank where the river took a bend. "See them mangoes? That's the *barrio*. That means 'little town.'" He spat into the dust. "That's where we got our company headquarters perimeter."

"What's this you said about a whole platoon guarding the company commander?" I said.

"Hard to believe all right, but that ain't no kidding. Most CO's keep a squad, but not Grimes. That ain't all either."

"What else?"

Willie spat. "He's got a couple of bodyguards."

"You're kidding?"

"Grimes is one human I don't kid about."

"Does he need bodyguards?"

"Well—I ain't got time to tell you all about it right now, but one of the boys tried to kill'im once, if that answers what you got'n mind." Willie chewed a couple of times. "He'd have'em though, whether the kid tried to kill'im or not. Grimes' the biggest damn coward in the United States Army."

3

As we approached the company perimeter, Willie drove slowly to prevent dust trails from revealing us to artillery spotters. Two dirty, bearded soldiers were standing waist deep in a foxhole on the right side of the road. They were tending a .30 machine gun, which was equally dirty.

"Gennulmen!" Willie said from the corner of his mouth.

The two soldiers returned the greeting with a sour nod and then, together, turned their eyes upon me. I nodded, but they made no effort to acknowledge it.

Most of the *barrio* had been burned out. A few *nepa* huts still stood, and scattered about among the piles of gray ashes were strips of heat-twisted sheet-metal roofing, but there wasn't enough of the buildings left to call it a *barrio* now. The perimeter was plotted in a crude circle among the ashes. In the middle of the perimeter, on stilts, stood what had probably been the only frame building in the *barrio* before the fire. Its sheet-metal roof had been painted olive drab. Poked out of one of the windows was a radio antenna, the only sign that the house was occupied.

In various poses of indifference and boredom, stood 30 or so men and, like the two machine gunners, they were bearded and dirty. The gray ashes had covered them all. I had been in the Army for almost four years and this was the first time I had ever seen a vehicle enter a perimeter without receiving a merry insult or a greeting of some sort. They merely stared—at me. I draped my bandoleer about my neck and, clutching my manila envelope, alighted from the jeep. While Willie hurriedly covered the jeep with a tarpaulin, I looked the men over.

George Company—the convict company of the 20th century. The men were carefully concealing any reaction they might have had to my arrival.

Suddenly, in the dusty silence, a voice called out to Willie. The voice, I first thought, was foreign, but before it stopped, I knew that it was indeed American. The voice had sounded as if its owner wasn't capable of speech in the normal manner but rather produced the sounds of vocal intercourse by emitting, from deep inside, a belch, with which it formed words.

I located the owner of the voice. He was leaning from one of the windows of the house. He was a short, round-faced man whose hair had thinned back to the middle of his head and what hair was left had been cropped so closely that, for a moment, I thought he was completely bald. His mouth was quite wide and his lips were thick and amazingly dark, for which a slang term existed, "liver lips." His hands rested on the sill of the window and in one of them was a half-smoked, half-chewed cigar, about which was curled a stubby forefinger. He wore fatigue pants and an undershirt.

"Is that the new foul-up, Crawford?" he said with that belching voice.

"Yes, Waco," Willie said. Willie, not long ago, had been cheerful in his own laconic manner, but now he was servile, visibly frightened.

"Well, damn it," the man belched, "send the son up here."

"Now wait a minute—" I began.

"Shut up!" Willie whispered sharply. "That's the captain."

Captain Grimes.

"I heard what you said, Crawford," Grimes said. He didn't seem particularly angry about it.

"Sorry, Waco."

"All right, *all right*, quit acting like a damn Sunday-school teacher. Send that foul-up to me."

"Yessir," Willie said. "I'll bring'im right up."

"I didn't tell you to bring'im up, Crawford," Captain Grimes said sourly. "I said, *send*'im up. . . . And Crawford—"

"Yes, Waco?" Willie's voice was actually trembling.

"Next time you call me sir, I'm going to send you to Norzagaray."

"Yes—yes, Waco."

"All right then, send that foul-up to me." Captain Grimes popped the cigar into his mouth and disappeared.

Willie shoved at me. "Hurry up," he said, whispering again. "Get up there."

"Now what the hell's all this—"

"Damn it, shut up and get up there"—then he pleaded with me—"for your own good."

I slipped my rifle sling over my shoulder, crossed the yard, and started up the steps that led to a closed door. Before I reached the third step the door opened and a thin, sparsely bearded kid stepped into my path. The kid was carrying a tommy-gun which he held in both hands, almost in the firing position. I tried to brush past him, but he reached for my shoulder and pushed down, preventing me from rising to the next step.

"Just put your rifle down right here, buddy," he said.

I thought he was joking, for his manner was right out of a gangster movie, including the narrowed eyes, the pursed lips, from which dangled a dead cigarette, and the surly voice. I tried to push on, but he moved the tommy-gun in a menacing manner.

"I said once, put the rifle down."

I couldn't take him seriously. "Want me to take off my shoes too?"

"Just don't get smart," he snarled. "Just don't get smart. Put it down."

I leaned the rifle against the house. "Okay?"

He opened the door and stepped behind me. Then he placed his hand in the small of my back and shoved gently. I stepped through the door, blinked in the sudden dimness, and stopped. He shoved again, and again, until I was standing in front of a battered field desk.

"Just wait," he said, and he leaned against the wall.

I waited for perhaps 15 minutes. During the first few minutes I heard nothing but the croaking of a lizard, which seemed to be lodged somewhere under the eaves of the house, and an occasional word, quietly spoken, from the men in the yard below. This was the quietest perimeter I had ever seen. There were no friendly insults or laughter, and so little talk that it was almost hard to believe that I was in the midst of an American military organization.

The guard, obviously one of the bodyguards Willie had told me about, said nothing. He cradled his tommy-gun in his left arm and stared at the floor. He ignored me completely. Nor did he become at all impatient. The beard,

Illustrated by ANTHONY KOKINOS and WILLIAM BRYANT

a dirty blond frizzle, was thin, nonexistent in spots, and told the truth about the age it was trying to hide.

Another minute passed before the door into an adjoining room opened and Captain Grimes strode heavily up to his desk and sat down.

My first impressions of him—short, half-bald, small-headed, round-faced and incredibly broad-shouldered—were made curiously indelible by his eyes. They were gray, a lighter gray than the ashes outside; a gray, I could see, of the hue of smoke from burning grass. They were the eyes that one seems to see through, but at the same time, during the one brief glance he directed at me, I thought I saw eyes that look deeply into a man and discovered his serious secrets.

Seated at the field desk, he stared unseeingly out the window and into the blue sky beyond the town's horizon. Then he moved; he scratched his groin. After another glance at me, which didn't chill me so much this time, he opened the desk drawer and chose, apparently from many, a cigar stub and put it as far into the corner of his mouth as it would go, where he clamped down upon it with his tiny teeth.

"Swanson," came the belching voice.

The guard sprang forward. "Yeah, Waco?"

"Get out there'n tell Crawford that he ain't driving the jeep no more," Captain Grimes said. "I told'im once before about calling me sir and I don't tell nobody nothing but once."

"Who you want driving it, Waco?"

"That's my worry. Just do like I say. Now get going." But before Swanson could move, Captain Grimes halted him with a gesture. "Where's Millard?"

"Down't the river, taking a bath."

"All right, never mind about Crawford now," Captain Grimes said hurriedly. "Wait'll Millard's back."

Captain Grimes looked me over. And I saw that I had been mistaken in one of my impressions of him. He didn't look into a man's eyes at all; he glared balefully at a spot on my forehead.

He held out his hand. "Give me them papers."

I handed him the manila envelope. He examined every form carefully and then went through them again. I suppose it took him 10 minutes, interrupted only by the croakings of the lizard, to read everything in the envelope. Once satisfied that he knew as much about me as the Army could put into its forms, he chose the record of my court-martial from the pile of papers and read it again. He stopped reading once to grin.

"Pretty good record," he said. "First you get a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star, then you get court-martialed. Rough, ain't it?"

"Yessir."

His voice clouded into a frown. "Didn't you hear what I told Crawford about calling me sir?"

"Sorry—Waco."

"Ain't no sniper potting *me* every time one of you guys call me sir." He read from the court-martial. " 'Struck an officer under combat circumstances.' "

The door opened as Grimes started to make a comment.

The newcomer was clean and freshly shaved. He, like Swanson, carried a tommy-gun and on his face was the same impossible movie toughness that Swanson affected.

"Swanson," Grimes said, "tend to Crawford. Hey, Millard, we got us another foul-up, name of Samuel F. Gifford. What's the 'F' stand for, Gifford?"

"Francis, sir—I mean, Waco."

"That's right—Waco," Grimes said. "Francis, huh? I got a sister named Frances. What're you doing with a girl's name? It's a girl's name, ain't it, Millard?"

"Yeah," Millard said sourly. "You got a girl's name, Gifford."

I kept my silence and Grimes, seeing he wasn't going to make me lose my temper, launched into what I presumed to be his stock lecture to all newcomers.

"You want to know what we'd do with a guy that'd strike an officer in Texas, Gifford?" he said, and winked at Millard. "Well, I'll tell you what we'd do in Texas. We'd stomp hell out of you, that's what we'd do in Texas. Ain't that right, Millard?"

"Yeah," Millard said. "We got a way of taking—"

"But the Army don't like our way," Grimes said gloomily. "And since the Army's paying our way, we got to do like the Army says. But I'll tell you something, Gifford, you won't hit no officer in George Company, 'cause if you do, it'll be the last *anybody* you hit. George Company's the end of the trail. We get the foul-ups and when they foulup here, they ain't no place to send'em except home in a box."

I never heard Captain Grimes address anybody by his rank, nor did I learn who the company officers were until three days later. When the morning patrols were sent out, Grimes went to his window, rested his hands on the sill (the cigar was always in the left hand), and, peering dully, at the ground below, bellowed in his great, belching voice, to which I could never become accustomed, "Johnson, take six men to Baker Junction," or "Sellers, take six men to Parade Hill." Always it was a name, never a title. I didn't know which of the two men he called most often—Johnson and Sellers—was the platoon officer. Nor could I tell their rank by their appearance. All of the men in the platoon, as they stumbled out of the perimeter on the morning patrols, kept their heads down and didn't speak at all. They were all dirty, bearded and sullen. Several times I saw small groups of them, safely out of earshot of the house, talking and, a few times, smiling, but they never laughed.

Insults and humiliations taken for granted, I was happy enough. I hadn't been yet called upon here to demonstrate my courage, but I was quite certain that I had none. I brooded upon that aspect of the new situation, but, oddly enough, I didn't dread anything in the future. I was experiencing a kind of resignation, or fatalism, that one feels when he knows he is going to be hurt and can't do anything about it; or, in the same vein, the way one feels when he sees a Jap shoot at him and knows only the fates of winds or the lack of the Jap's skill in marksmanship can save him.

4

I WAS ASSIGNED to the first platoon, which was the one now guarding Grimes' perimeter, second squad, which was Willie's, although he was a private. The talk was that some time soon, "ought to be any day," our platoon would exchange duties with the third platoon, which was on outpost duty now. In the meantime, beginning tomorrow morning, I would draw patrol.

That afternoon, when I had settled down with Willie, who had chosen me as his buddy, the men in the platoon gathered about me and wanted to know about Manila, which I had seen not long after the First Cavalry had liberated it, shortly before my court-martial. I enlarged on my small experiences in the city because the men were so eager to hear about the women there. They were disappointed when they found I had sampled none of the fleshpots myself. One of them, a big fellow with a friendly grin on his large face, kidded me for being a puritan. His name was Johnson and, because something about him indicated that he was accustomed to command, I thought he must be the platoon sergeant.

"What'd they send you out for, Gifford?" Johnson asked.

"I hit an officer in combat."

"Fist or did you shoot'im?"

"Rifle butt."

"You should've shot'im."

Amused by now at the sameness of the reactions I had gotten from everybody, I said, "That's a hell of a way for a

platoon sergeant to be talking." I grinned at him. "You're supposed to tell me how wrong I was."

He chuckled. "Afraid I'm not qualified to speak as a platoon sergeant. I'm just a second lieutenant."

"I'm sorry, sir. I thought—"

"Cut it out." He laughed again. "I'm really General Kruger, out acting like a second john so I can find out about George Company."

"Old General Kruger'd mow Miles and Grimes down to size if he knew about this," I said.

"Some of these days," Sellers announced, "somebody's going to catch Grimes out of reach of them two goons of his'n rip his belly wide open."

"Uh-hmmm," Willie grunted.

"Well," Savage said, the first word I remembered having heard him speak, "it's been tried before."

"Has it?" I was intensely interested. Many such stories had followed the First World War, but I had seen nothing of it in my years overseas. "What happened?"

Savage glanced at Sellers, then gestured with a nod of his head. "Let old Sellers tell you," he said with a certain affection. "He likes to talk."

Sellers, far from being insulted, immediately launched into the story.

"Guy's name was Shelby. Little guy, oh I'd say—five-four or so—and he was always looking like he's about to break down and cry. I don't have no idea why he was sent to George Company, but anyhow he showed up around the beginning of the Leyte Campaign.

"Old Grimes used'im for orderly till the fighting got so hot Grimes got scared and moved his command post back a mile or so behind the main line, and he left Shelby with us. That was Grimes' big mistake, it turned out, because this little guy Shelby was one of them kind that's so religious—what you call'em's—"

"Conscientious objectors?" I said.

"Yeah, that's it," Sellers agreed. "Anyhow, maybe that's why he was sent to the Company. Anyhow, Bailey—Lieutenant Bailey—he got killed on patrol about a week or so ago—Bailey taken Shelby out on a patrol and Shelby screwed it up just good.

"Seems Bailey sent Shelby out to scout and when Shelby seen a bunch of Japs he never said a word—said later that he didn't want our boys to kill'em—and damn'f Bailey's platoon didn't walk right into them Japs and lose three men and four wounded.

"Well, if you'd a knowed Bailey, you'd know how he looked after his men so good, so this was something that he couldn't take. He got so mad I thought he was going to shoot old Shelby. Anyhow, he sent'im back to Grimes, but Grimes never said much about it, except a few of them cracks he makes about war being a good place to be killed. But somehow Cobb—that's the mail clerk—forgot and said something about it at Regimental when he went back to get our mail, so Miles found out about it and sent Grimes a radio message telling'im to put the screws to old Shelby.

"You know how it is, Miles brought Grimes into this outfit and all—"

I shook my head, but Sellers didn't pause to explain.

"—and Grimes never does nothing Miles wants in a half-baked way. He put Shelby to digging a Triple-Six—" a hole which is six feet wide, six feet deep and six long—"right in the middle of the perimeter in that sun there on Leyte and you might know how hot that was. About every thirty minutes old Grimes'd come out and watch Shelby for a few minutes, then he'd cuss him for being one of them conscious objectors. After a couple of days and old Shelby'd passed out three or four times from the heat, the hole finally got dug, mainly on account of a few of us sneaked around and done some digging at night.

"Old Grimes handed Shelby a Prince Albert can and told'im to put it square in the middle of the hole, and then he told Shelby to cover it up. Shelby got it done; it never took'im long to do that. Then Grimes come back out and got the whole platoon and made us stomp around till we had the dirt all packed down good and tight, then he got Shelby and told'im to find that P.A. can because there was a little message in it for him. Old Shelby went right to work.

"Dug all that day, with Grimes sitting around cussing'im and all, and Bailey and Johnson trying to talk the Captain into letting Shelby take a rest. Not Grimes. Not that———. He told Bailey and Johnson if they said one more word they'd hate the day they'd ever saw Shelby. Hell, Bailey was the man who ought to be mad at Shelby, but he kept after Grimes till he got sent off on a patrol that was supposed to be suicide, but Bailey come back with not a man scratched. Grimes'll do that when he don't like a man—wants to get the man killed. Anyhow, Shelby kept digging.

"Finally Shelby got the P.A. can and Grimes told'im to open it. There was a note in it saying. 'You praying son, put this can back in the hole and cover it up and dig it up again till I tell you to stop.'

"Shelby got to digging and Bailey and Johnson kept fussing at Grimes. And one day three or four snipers sneaked up close and started potting at us. Grimes sent Bailey to clean the snipers out and Bailey done it, but while he was doing it old Shelby come up to Grimes' hole and started saluting and yelling 'Captain Grimes' at'im, trying to show the snipers who the CO was so they'd pot'im.

"Bailey come back saying the snipers was all dead, so Grimes jumped out of his hole and beat the living hell out of Shelby. And that done it. That done it. Old Shelby crawled over to one of the machine guns and aimed it square at Grimes. He fired off a couple of rounds and knocked old Grimes' helmet off, but the gun jammed. Shelby didn't know how to clear it, so he jumped up and took out for Grimes with his trench knife.

"Well—from the looks of things, that was all for Grimes, 'cause he was so scared he just froze. But Bailey had missed a sniper and the sniper fired at Grimes just about that time and got Shelby right through the head, first time I ever seen a sniper hit anybody.

"Grimes wobbled back to his hole, taken a snort out of his bottle, run out to the jeep and taken off. Come back that afternoon with Millard and Swanson and told me'n Willie that we was busted. Millard and Swanson was taking our places. And ain't nobody got near Grimes since."

It wasn't an easy tale to believe, but Sellers had told it easily, without pause, as if sure of his facts, and Willie had nodded several times during its telling, so there was nothing for me to do but believe it.

"Does Colonel Miles know about it?"

"Hell man," Sellers said. "He *started* it!"

"What about General Hix?" I said.

Willie shook his head. "I don't much think he does. I talked to the General once. Seemed to be a pretty good guy."

"Yeah, but a full colonel in the U. S. Army—" I began.

All of them laughed at my naïveté.

"Miles knowed Grimes back in the Regular Army," Sellers explained, "when Grimes was a buck sergeant. Fact is, Miles commanded a foul-up company in the Regulars and first thing he done when he took over the Regiment after Colonel Cozzens got killed was to make this a foul-up company. That's the way they done it in the Regulars and Miles done'er that way with this outfit. Only, to Miles' way of thinking, anybody who's a National Guardsman is a foul-up."

"Can't somebody talk to the Inspector General?"

"Nobody gets a chance," Sellers said. "When we're on the line, Grimes, Cobb and the two goons is the only ones that ever gets to Regimental and Cobb's scared to death. When we're in garrison—well, everybody but George gets garrison, and we're out'n the woods somewheres digging ditches."

I nodded. But it was hard to believe. I had heard tales of George Company when I was still in Recon and they had been hard enough to believe then, but now . . . there was nothing here but the obvious truth. I keenly resented my old friends in Recon because they weren't believing the story

and weren't taking it to MacArthur's Headquarters, where a sympathetic officer from the Inspector General's Department could hear it.

"This used to be a good regiment," I said.

"Sure it did," Johnson said. "The worst thing that ever happened to this outfit was when—"

"Was when Colonel Cozzens got killed."

"That's right!" Johnson said. "I don't want to sound like a brass-hat snob, but you guys being enlisted men couldn't get to know Colonel Cozzens as well as I could. He was the finest man I've ever known. He's the kind of man I always wanted my own father to be. And when he got killed, I felt just about the same as I'd've felt if somebody in my own family had died."

I cleared my throat. "I know what you mean," I said, and had to clear my throat again. "He was my father-in-law."

Johnson and Willie were stunned. Willie turned his head away and pretended to clear the stale tobacco from his mouth. Johnson peered into the ground with embarrassment.

"Lord, Sam," Johnson murmured. "I didn't know that. Me and my big mouth. . . ." He fell silent.

And the loneliness and violence of three years away from my peacetime home, Jenny, Poppa, Momma, Bill Joe and Colonel Cozzens (his promotion to general would never become a part of the character he had left in Gray's Landing)—all of it caught up with me at once. Tears welled up in my eyes and I scrambled to my feet and hurried to the privacy of my own foxhole. There I could remember Gray's Landing—and my people—as I saw them in my dreams that night. They weren't quite as they actually were, for the Army had given me so much bitterness that I could remember only the sweetness of those misty days in Gray's Landing.



Book II

The Young and Sturdy Dreamers

It was spring and 1936.

"Boy, Sam," Bill Joe said with disgust, "you ought to be glad that you don't have a sister." He glared at Jenny, who sat between us in the cab of the pickup truck. "What'd *you* have to come along for?"

Jenny, her braces showing when she opened her mouth, replied innocently, "Because I wanted to go swimming too."

"Then why in the hell didn't you go to the *Park?* They got a pool there too, you know."

Jenny nodded. "I know it."

"Then why'd you make Mother tell me I had to take you with us?"

"I don't like to go to the Park." Her eyes were getting slightly damp.

I studiously examined the rows of new cotton that fluttered past.

"*Why?*" Bill Joe fumed.

She didn't answer.

"Answer me," Bill Joe insisted, "*why?*"

And in a small voice, she did answer: "The boys make fun of me."

And that stopped Bill Joe. He was still mad, because we had hidden a case of cold beer near the Creek this morning and Bill Joe swore that Jenny would tell if she found out about it. What had started as a magnificent intrigue was now a family brawl. Since early this morning we had been talking about the beer, the first we had had in any quantity, and now, as Bill Joe had said earlier, "that snaggle-toothed little devil was going to ruin the whole thing."

We drove deeper into the Bottom. The cotton had been planted two months ago and it was beginning to make a good show now. The sprouts were very green and they looked tender enough to eat. A mile ahead the levee could be seen, a hunched snake, green with grass, that followed the lazy course of the River. The sun was warm, comfortably warm, for we had had a harsh winter and spring had been a little late this year. It was only now, late in May, that the Creek had become warm enough to swim in, and I suspected that we would spend more time basking in the sun than we would in the water.

Bill Joe, who was driving, hit a rut and Jenny bounced against me, where she stayed a little longer than was necessary. If, I thought, she would get rid of those steel-rimmed glasses and hurry up and make those braces straighten her teeth, she might be pretty. Her body was beautiful, even during this her awkward fifteenth year. I felt guilty for thinking about her body; after all, she *was* two years younger than I.

"You didn't care if I came along, did you, Sam?" she asked me.

Before I could answer, Bill Joe shook his head.

"No," Jenny said, "don't look at Billy Joe. You didn't care, did you?"

"Well," I began, not wanting to hurt her, "maybe you'd've had more fun at the Park."

"I told you once," Jenny cried, "the boys make fun of me."

"I don't know why they'd want to do that."

"*I* do," Bill Joe said.

Jenny shook her head. "Billy Joe!"

"Damnit, my name is *Bill* Joe!"

"I'm sorry."

"I guess you're going to tell on me for cussing too!"

"No, I'm not."

"You'd better not."

"I won't."

We turned off the county road and took the field road that led across the fields of cotton. This was Poppa's land, someday mine, and I looked at it with a vaguely proprietary interest. But I wouldn't own it for a long, long time. Poppa was 47 and . . .

We drove past the pine thicket and Bill Joe stopped the pickup at the bank of the Creek. It was probably the most beautiful spot in our state. A small waterfall emptied into a pool, which was surrounded by the abiding pines. On the surface of the pool there floated a few pine cones.

"Okay," Bill Joe growled. "Jenny, you dress here and me and Sam'll dress in the thicket."

"Sam and I," corrected Jenny.

But Bill Joe wasn't going to be angered by the correction: our beer was in the thicket.

"Come on, Sam," Bill Joe said. "You'n be getting the picnic out," he said to Jenny. "And don't take that potato salad out of the ice!"

"Billy Joe," she called after us, "I'm not dumb."

Out of earshot, Bill Joe growled, "Like hell she isn't."
"You oughten pick on her like that," I said.
"She deserves all she gets and more."
We walked through the pines until we reached the hole we had labored over early this morning. Our beer was there in a number three wash tub.
"All my life I've been wanting to get drunk, just to see what it's like," Bill Joe said, "and damn'f *she* doesn't have to tag along."
I began unbuttoning my shirt. "I bet Jenny wouldn't tell anybody if we drank some of it."
"I bet she *would!* All she wants to do is tell on me."
"When'd she ever tell on you?"
"Why . . ." He couldn't remember. "Many a time," he said stoutly, "many a time."
I hunkered down so Jenny wouldn't see. "I'm going to drink one."
"She'll *tell,* I'm telling you! She'll *tell!*"
"She won't smell it."
I drank it. And Bill Joe took it as a dare. "But don't let her smell your breath."
We gulped it down—which, we were later to learn, was our most foolish act of the afternoon—and scrambled out of our clothes and into our swimming trunks. I was feeling dizzy and silly before we reached the pool.
Jenny was sitting on the huge brown rock that slants into the pool. Fevered by the beer, my breath was almost taken away, for Jenny's body was nothing less than spectacular. I stopped abruptly and stared. Still gawky with adolescence, she was nevertheless beautiful. She sat sedately on the rock, legs tightly together, her hands cupped, with what she hoped was casual grace, over her lap.
She feels, I thought, like she's naked. And indeed, the bathing suit she wore fitted too tightly. Mrs. Cozzens had forgotten to warn her daughter that she had grown during the winter until the suit was disgraceful.
"Come on," Bill Joe said.
And then he too stopped. "Sisto!"
"Now Billy Joe—" she began, and only then I noticed that she was wearing lipstick.
"Take it off," Bill Joe said roughly.
"I won't do it."
"The hell you won't," he said and rushed her.
She dived into the pool and easily outdistanced him in the water. She was shouting and blowing with the cold water, but she had no trouble outswimming him. She would have got away—to go where, I have no idea—if I hadn't intercepted her at the other bank. I held her, young and rigid, while Bill Joe rubbed roughly at her lips with his thumb.
It was then that the beer caught up with us. We belched almost at the same time. And Jenny jerked free.
"Y'all've been drinking!"
Without acknowledging Jenny, Bill Joe turned on me, his tough young face crumpled into a frown of anger. "See!" he shouted. "I *told* you she'd smell it." Then he whirled on his sister. "I guess you're going to tell."
"No," Jenny said pertly and ran to the truck, where she had hidden her lipstick. She applied a generous coating to her lips. I went back into the pine thicket and dragged the tub of ice and beer into the open.
"And that isn't all," Jenny said archly. "I'm going to drink some beer too."
"No," Bill Joe said bluntly. "No beer."
"Then I'll tell."
Bill Joe was shaken. Colonel Cozzens had never spanked his children, no more than Poppa had me, but the Colonel's gentle face, when drawn into a stern frown, was enough to chill even the most daring of 17-year-old boys. And not even Bill Joe had the nerve to incur that frown.
"All right," Bill Joe said grudgingly, "but I don't like threatening."
Jenny reached for a bottle of beer. I took her wrist.
"I'd rather get told on," I said.
She immediately let go of the bottle and, without a word, walked away and sat on the rock that slanted into the pool. Her back was very straight and her shoulders were square and held back.
Bill Joe, his normal humor restored, said, "I know somebody that's got a C-R-U-S-H on you, Sam."
She stopped behind him and deliberately hit him as hard as she could. I should have warned him, but I was so embarrassed and startled by her sudden fury that it didn't occur to me. Bill Joe toppled over and, hysterical with laughter, shouted:
"That ain't all, Sam!" He dodged Jenny's flying foot. "She claims you're the man she's going to *marry!*"
He yelped with pain when Jenny's bare foot caught him in the ribs. And Jenny, her foot hurting, ran back to the slanting rock and sat down. Bill Joe, still gurgling with laughter, crawled to his feet and opened another bottle of beer.
From her slanted rock, Jenny said:
"Sam Gifford, I hope you die before morning!"

2

During the spring the oaks on our lawn were unbelievably green and strong. Their massive boughs drooped languidly over the slate roof of the house where I was born and where four generations of Grays and Giffords had been born before me. Poppa's mother had been a Gray.
Gray's Landing is the town, population 8,097. founded in 1818 by my great-great-great-grandfather, an adventurer whose adventures with the laws of Georgia had caused him to come off short for the first and only time in his life. First he went to central Louisiana, where he didn't like the malaria, and then to Texas, where he didn't like the wind, and then to New Orleans, where he acquired a "wanted" status for the second time—and a wife, Rene.
There is a legend that Cobb Gray said: "If I keep on having trouble with the law, there's only one thing I can do: I'm going somewhere and that's going to be where a man can make his own law."
And he did. He fled to Baton Rouge with his new wife and there he stayed until he managed—somehow—to buy a wagon and four mules. And he started north. He didn't stop until he had followed the Mississippi to the place where it is joined by the Arkansas. He followed the Arkansas almost three hundred miles until he found the Bottom where our farm is now.
"Rene, see that big flat of land on yonder side of the stream?" Cobb pointed to the Bottomlands on the north side of the river. "Floods won't reach that none too easy, Rene. And that's where we're going to live."
But he was wrong about the floods. He planted pines from Hogback Ridge around the pool with the slanted rock and built his cabin, vowing that a mansion would be built like the one he had lived in before his collision with Georgia's laws. But the flood got him. For four years the water came up with the spring and stopped, and on the fifth year Cobb Gray managed to get his wife and four children out of the Bottom minutes ahead of the highest flood the valley had known.
He built another place to live, the "mansion" he had spoken of, far away from the cruel river. And that was the house I lived in.

3

There are few pleasures quite so keen as loafing at a gin in spring. There is the smell of last season's rotted lint, like the penetrating scent of recently dusty pavement cooled

by a fresh rain; the rancid grease in a thousand gears; and the dry, foreign smell of the jute bagging. And in Poppa's office there is the smell of bookkeeper's ink; of tobacco; of Poppa's Dickens and Thackeray volumes which fill the bookcase against the wall; and there is Poppa's own smell, soap and shaving lotion.

Living was a heady experience this morning. My new manhood was accepted, symbolized by Poppa's careful explanation of everything he did around the gin. It was such a grand experience that I almost forgot the headache yesterday afternoon's beer had left me with.

Poppa was a deliberate man. All his actions, the way he talked, walked, smiled and studied me with his cool blue eyes, were slow. But somehow, he made things work fast at the gin. I was enough like him when I was a boy that I was "Little Felix." But there was some of Momma's nervousness in me, too, and the nickname was dropped before I finished high school.

"Got a headache, son?" Poppa's deep, gentle voice always sounded deeper and gentler when he was in the gin.

"Yessir."

"Seldom a man wakes up with a headache."

My face warmed. He knew; he always knew; there was nothing Poppa didn't know or couldn't find out about me. He saw through me as easily as if my soul were under glass—and he still loved me.

"Yessir."

"Something you ate," Poppa said. He was busy with some machinery orders and it sounded for all the world that he was making idle conversation, but Poppa knew about the beer. Poppa always knew.

I sat in the big, comfortable chair behind Poppa's desk. The gin office wasn't very large. There was room enough for his big, roll-top mahogany desk (Poppa got a good licking from Grandaddy Gifford for carving his initials on its surface when he was a boy), "the girl's" desk (she didn't work today—Saturday), and the two-shelf bookcase that held Poppa's Dickens and Thackeray.

The Dickens and Thackeray were the subjects of long, friendly arguments between Poppa and Colonel Cozzens. Both bad long ago expressed their opinions on each writer and their arguments were difficult to follow. One was likely to remember something the other had said years ago and bring it into the argument as if it had been uttered only a moment before.

"Now Julian"—Poppa was the only one in town who still called Colonel Cozzens by his given name—"you know as well as you know your own name that Dickens was not a comic writer. He wrote for one reason: to right wrongs. . . ."

Those books gathered dust sometimes, for often Poppa would go through a phase during which he read nothing but the *Gazette*. But he always came back to the two Victorians. "A man gets hungry for some real reading," he would say.

I glanced over at the bookcase. Thackeray I could take and like; Dickens I left alone. Poppa had been a poor teacher with Dickens, but he had done excellently with—

"Hey!" Bill Joe said tiredly as he opened the door. He dragged himself across the room and seated himself on Poppa's desk.

"You have a headache too, Bill Joe?" Poppa inquired casually.

But Bill Joe wasn't embarrassed. His tough young face showed no guilt at all. "Musta been something I et, like the man said."

"Must've been," Poppa murmured. He went back to his work.

Bill Joe sneaked me a questioning look and I nodded. "Jenny!" Bill Joe mouthed silently. I shook my head.

"Must be a very interesting conversation," Poppa said. "Only the young have important secrets."

"I'm sorry, Poppa."

"Me too, Mister Felix. We were just cutting up."

Colonel Cozzens entered, first poking his head inside with an inquiring expression; then, seeing Poppa, he smiled, as always, and stepped inside.

"Morning, Sam." He shook my hand. "I've been looking around for you since you graduated. Been thinking about doing a little recruiting."

I had never actually considered joining the National Guard, but I said: "I've been thinking about a little joining too, sir."

"Good!" he said. "We'll be glad to have you. I shanghaied Bill Joe this morning."

During the years immediately following the War Between the States, the carpetbaggers forced the dissolution of Gray's Rifles, a quasi-military social organization, which found its recruits among the wealthy families on Oak Street. But when the carpetbaggers were got shed of, Gray's Rifles was quickly reformed and soon regained its old social prestige. At the end of the nineteenth century, when most Americans were ready to forget pretenses, the Rifles continued to drill every Monday night. It wasn't until 1921 that old Colonel Jacob Cozzens, the present Colonel's father, put an end to it by making the Rifles the regimental headquarters company of the state's National Guard. Most of the membership of the Rifles was commissioned.

The original snobbery was still alive to a degree. Colonel Cozzens chose his officers by recruiting young men and, four or five years later, commissioning them. Although more than half of the officers in 1936 were from homes other than those on Oak Street, I knew that Bill Joe and I had been chosen to serve the four- or five-year apprenticeship preparatory to a commission. There was a vague satisfaction in being aware that my future was so perfectly planned for me.

4

THE SUMMER was a hot one. It was almost a yellow-headed, drouth, summer. But in late July, when the cotton needed it most, there was a good enough rain and everybody made a little money. But, as the Colonel said, "After six years of poor production and three major drouths, it's going to take three good years for us to recoup our losses." He was referring to the money he and Poppa had spent to keep the small farmers alive during those years when the wind blew so much of our good, clean dirt away.

I joined the National Guard and went to drill every Monday night. I learned little of the military tradition. Bill Joe and I were usually late after having spent the afternoon mixed up with what the Colonel called "summer devilment." Our names were constantly on the demerit list, a blackboard that hung on the north wall of the drill court. Of the 30-odd men in my platoon, Intelligence and Reconnaissance, I knew but two, Raker and Carr, and them only because they both worked at the gin. I didn't know their first names. It occurred to me, years later, when these two and many others of their station became my close friends, that they must have thought that I was a terrible snob.

Jenny spent the last two months of the summer with her aunt, the Colonel's sister, who lived in New Orleans. I left for the University without seeing her and wasn't to see her until four years later. I understood, from Bill Joe, that she graduated from high school and enrolled at "one of those fancy girls' schools in New Orleans." She was always away when I was home. She went to Europe the summer of my junior year. I never found out what she did during the other summers. I almost forgot that Bill Joe had a sister.

During my first two years at the University I was a poor enough student. The Dean put me on probation twice. Bill Joe, oddly enough, was an above-average student. He was studying aeronautical engineering with an energy that was surprising, because he had never shown an intense interest in anything. During the summer of 1940 he changed his

goal. Originally he had wanted to be an airline pilot, but when Hitler invaded Poland and there began to be heard some talk that the Army Air Corps was going to expand, he decided that he was going to be a fighter pilot. His tough face became a pale, brooding face as he applied himself to the difficult study of engineering. We were roommates and remained close friends, but we shared nothing in common except an abiding interest in girls. They never really left our minds, even after I stopped loafing and began studying during the final months of my sophomore year.

When I think of it now, Bill Joe and I were never typical under-graduates. Bill Joe was too busy with his studying and, during his junior and senior years, his flying lessons. Both of us had pledged a fraternity when we were freshmen, but the crude behavior of our fraternity brothers was too much for us. Bill Joe resigned with me and we took rooms at a boarding house off the campus. I went home more often than Bill Joe, but I liked for him to go too, because when he could find the time for a home visit, he flew us down in a light plane that could be rented for the weekend.

During the summer of our junior year, we fished a lot and, with Poppa and Colonel Cozzens, we set a trotline across the river. We caught so many catfish that Momma and Mrs. Cozzens finally protested. We started giving the fish to the Negro sharecroppers who lived in the north end of the Bottom.

I didn't understand the impatience of my senior year. College study became lifeless and, although I worked hard enough, I wanted to go home to stay. I had become solidly infected with the reading habit and I often dreamed of sitting in the big, comfortable leather reading chair at home, where, after a day's work at the gin, I could relax with a glass of beer and a book. I didn't know it then, but I was beginning to assume the conservatism that Jenny later chided me about.

So, when Bill Joe left for a summer of intense study for his commercial flying license and I boarded a train for home, bringing with me but two bags—proof that college hadn't burdened me with any souvenirs—I felt relieved of a vaguely irritating past, most of which I wanted to forget. As the early evening lights of Gray's Landing flashed past the windows of the train, I was elated and ready to take my place in the life I never wanted to leave.

The sight of my parents as they stood on the station platform was enough for me. I had forgotten about Hitler and Poland and Hitler and England; I was home.

5

The First Methodist Church of Gray's Landing is more of a holiday house than it is one of worship. The women wear print frocks to their "coffees," "teas" and bridge parties, but they wear their "creations" to church. The men, most of whom wear net shirts and seersucker suits, stand gravely about the 31 steps that lead up to the five-pillared veranda, talking fishing. There is little shop talk. The men watch their women with a certain affection, for it is on a Sunday morning, with the bright sun and the colorful dresses, that a wife looks her best.

Poppa and I were half leaning, half sitting on the marble railing of the steps, smoking and enjoying a comfortable silence. The children of the Oak Street families were home from college for the summer holidays. I was amazed at the number of pretty girls of my generation. They were laughing and flirting and they were happy.

"Wonder where Julian and his family are?" Poppa murmured. "First time he's ever waited this long. Usually we have a good fish talk before the organ begins."

"Bill Joe's in Arizona."

"What for?"

"Working on his commercial license—airplanes."

Poppa nodded. From the babble of female voices that came from a group standing on the veranda, we heard Momma's quick laugh. Poppa gravely winked at me and I smiled. There are few things Momma enjoys more than the Sunday-morning gossip session. Poppa smiled to himself and I realized, now when I was 21 years old, how much he loved her. He saw her faults as clearly as he had always seen through my small pretenses, but he loved her in spite of them.

Suddenly the organ thundered out above the babble and, without saying a word to each other, Poppa and I dropped our cigarettes and stepped on them. Momma, still engrossed with her talk with her friends, stopped immediately and joined us promptly when Poppa stopped at the edge of her group and said softly, "All right, Cleo." With Momma between her son and her husband, the same formation that had been formed on a Sunday morning as long as I could remember, we entered the church.

Ray Mosby, an usher since his graduation from the University four years ago, greeted us: "Morning, Mister Gifford; morning, Miss Cleo; morning, Sam."

"Morning, Ray," Poppa and I said.

"Good morning, Ray Earl," Momma said and squeezed his arm.

The thunder of the organ made the church seem huge and open. Ray led the way down the aisle to the pew we had occupied since the days before I was born, when the church was largely supported by pew rental. Now rental was considered old-fashioned, maybe even feudal, but the church was never so crowded but that every family, from Oak Street to Railroad Avenue, knew for a fact it would sit where it always had.

We took our seat on the front row and Poppa glanced across the semicircle of the front-row pews to see whether the Colonel and his family were there yet.

The organist finished the Prelude and chorded softly while the choir filed in. The Cozzens entered as the choir began to sing. Ray Mosby escorted them to their pew. Mrs. Cozzens, a large, stern woman, came first, then Jenny . . . and I didn't notice the Colonel.

Jenny was beautiful. She no longer wore her glasses and her teeth were straight and white; the braces had done their work and had been discarded. She looked cool and fresh and, standing by her tall father, I noticed for the first time that she wasn't a big woman at all. When I had remembered her during the past four years, I had always thought of her as about the same size as her mother. She was small, trim and very erect. I suppose it had been her breasts that had caused me to remember her as larger than she was.

The congregation stood for the Call to Worship and the preacher, Jack Gifford, my cousin, entered and watched the two sun-browned boys light the candles before the altar. Colonel Cozzens leaned close to Jenny and whispered. She immediately smiled and looked toward our pew. She dug in her purse and brought forth a pair of horn-rimmed glasses. She found me and the smile became radiant.

I think I loved her from that moment on.

As soon as the preacher had finished the benediction, "And now may the good Lord bless you and keep you . . ." I crossed the semicircle and joined the Cozzens. I stood there, grinning foolishly, as Jenny grasped my arms and said:

"Sam, Sam, I'd just plain hug you if we weren't in church."

Vaguely, from the edge of the haze which seemed to surround us, I heard the Colonel chuckle.

Momma and Poppa joined us and we filed past the altar, each of us saying to Jack, "Enjoyed your sermon," and somehow I found that we were all standing outside in the bright sun. It was very important that I talk to Jenny and just as I started to beckon her aside, she took my arm and we walked away. We stood in the shade of the big oak that grows at the corner of the Church lot.

"Jenny," I blurted, "you're beautiful."

She smiled. "Do you think so? Do my glasses bother you? I'll take them off if you want me to."

"No—" I stammered. Then: "Uh—you're beautiful!"

"I'm not too young any more?"

"No," I said. "No."

"Ask me for a date then."

"All right," I muttered, trying frantically to think of the right way to say it. "Swimming?" I said weakly.

"All right," she said promptly. "This afternoon. Two o'clock."

"All right—two o'clock."

In the car with Poppa and Momma it occurred to me that this Sunday morning was the first time Momma had ridden home from church without talking. I stopped the car in the driveway and got out. I didn't want to go in the house. I wandered off into the back yard and sat on the garden-hose roll until Poppa came out to get me for lunch.

"Hmm," Poppa murmured. "I felt the same way the first time I saw your mother when she came home from college."

"Sir?" I said dimly.

"Did you ask her for a date?"

"Yessir."

Poppa shook his head. "Young men're a lot more forward now than they were in my time. It took me two weeks to get up the nerve." He smiled down on me. "Let's go eat some lunch."

6

She drew her knees up on the car seat, her feet under her, and faced me. She wasn't wearing her glasses. She wore one of those crisp, eggshell-colored dresses, which gave her an almost completely innocent appearance. She chatted easily about several subjects, knowing that I couldn't talk. My face hurt from so much smiling, but I couldn't help showing the pleasure I felt.

"Are we going to the Park or to the Creek?"

"The Creek," I said, "if it's all right with you."

She nodded and suddenly laughed. "My reputation'll suffer on account of this. Miss Belle warned me." She smiled at something she remembered. "Do you remember the time you and Billy Joe let me wear lipstick because I smelled the beer you'd been drinking? I always wondered how that lipstick and my braces looked together."

"Fine," I said.

"Sweet Sam! You wouldn't hurt my feelings for the world, would you?"

The shade was deep and the water that fell over the lip of the falls was white and flowing furiously. This was a wet spring, the best one we had had in more than 10 years, and the water was cool and blue in the pool. A few pine cones floated past to lodge on the gravel bar below the pool.

"Did you ever wonder why these pines are here," I said, "when you can't find'em anywhere else in the Bottom?"

"Nooo," she said, "but I'd like to know."

"When old Cobb Gray settled this Bottom, he couldn't stand living without a few pine trees around his house like he'd had when he was a young man in Georgia. So he just hied up to Hogback Ridge and got 'imself a few saplings. Said the wind blowing through them made him sleep better."

We got out of the car. "You know a lot about your family, don't you?"

I nodded. "A little bit."

Jenny dressed in the car and I in the thicket. The tub, now rusted almost to nothing, was still there and still filled with beer bottles. It made me smile and feel much older than my 21 years. I quickly squirmed into my trunks and waited for her to call me. Feeling somewhat like a peeping Tom, I peered toward the car. She was sitting in the back seat, applying lipstick. I watched her run a comb through her hair before she stepped out of the car.

"Hey!" she called. "I'm ready."

I stared at her so hard that, walking out of the thicket, I got my feet tangled in a fallen bough and almost fell on my face.

"How you like my two-piece?" she said and pirouetted gaily. Her hair whirled about her head. She held her bathing cap in her hand.

I managed a weak whistle.

She ran down the slanted rock and dived into the water and I was right behind her. We came to the surface facing each other. Treading water, we looked at each other for a second, and suddenly, for no reason at all, we both laughed.

"Hi!" she said.

I kissed her. We both sank.

Again on the surface, she caught her breath and said, "Why, Sam!" with mock astonishment.

"What would Miss Belle say about that?"

"Wellll—since it happened to me," Jenny said, "she wouldn't like it. But if it'd happened to her, she'd probably think it was all right."

"What do you think about it?"

"I think it was fine."

I reached for her again, but with a laugh she kicked away from me and retreated to the rock. I caught her there and she let me kiss her again.

"You look funny with lipstick on," she murmured.

I wiped it off on the back of my hand, but before I could reach for her again, she was gone with a splash. We played all sorts of childish games. We dived for gravel to prove that we could go to the bottom of the pool; we sat behind the falls, where she let me kiss her again; we raced from one end of the pool to the other and she, the winner, received a water-logged pine cone as a prize. When we were tired we stretched out on the slanting rock to rest. She cradled her head in the hollow of my shoulder.

"Swimming makes me sleepy," she said.

And we both napped. It was late in the afternoon when I awoke.

"Did you know you look like a young hawk when you're asleep?" she asked.

"I've got the beak for it."

She tugged at my nose. "You have a pretty nose!" Then she twisted it sharply.

I picked her up and tossed her into the pool. She shrieked with laughter and when I sat at the edge of the slanted rock to help her out, she pulled me in with her, dunked me thoroughly and tried to get away. I grabbed her feet and pulled her under. She hugged me convulsively while we were under water.

When we rose to the surface she was suddenly serious. "We'd better go."

"Oh," I said. "Yeah. I guess so."

"*Disappointed!* That's the nicest compliment I've ever had."

"Let's stay."

"Daddy said that you're one of the bunch he wanted to come to non-com school after church tonight. He'd be put out if you didn't show up."

"Oh—all right. After non-com school?"

"All right."

I waited in the pool while she dressed. There was no sound but the gentle splash of the falls. Through the pines I could see the neat rows of young cotton, stretching seemingly without end into the blue mist at the base of Hogback Ridge. The spring sun of late afternoon baked into the dirt and made it smell strong and rich. She sat on the rock and combed her hair while I dressed.

"Daddy'll demote you if you're late tonight, won't he?"

"Not me," I called from behind the car.

"Why not?"

"You can't demote a private."

I heard her laugh. "Daddy said you could get a commission if you'd just apply for it."

"I'm not militarily ambitious."

We hardly spoke as we drove back to town. I knew though, that she was worried about her conduct today. If anybody discovered that she had been swimming—alone—with me, and in a two-piece bathing suit at that, there would be some talk.

"Do you remember the time Billy Joe said I had a crush on you?" she asked suddenly.

I nodded. It embarrassed me to remember it.

"I wonder what made me say what I did to you?" she murmured. "I cried like a baby when I went to bed that night. I even got up to call you and apologize, but Daddy talked me out of it."

"You shouldn't've worried about it."

"But I did because I *did* have a crush on you." She amazed me—the things she could say so easily.

I plunged in with: "What about now?"

She laughed. "Oh-ho! Trying to get me to commit myself, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"I'm sorry, Sam. I didn't mean to be brazen."

"You weren't brazen."

"Yes, I was. But anyhow—the answer is yes." She touched her forehead to my shoulder. "There—I *did* commit myself." She hugged my arm. "Miss Belle would have a fit. She says a girl should keep the men guessing until the very last minute."

When I stopped the car in front of the Cozzens' house, Jenny kissed me solidly; and when I drove away the curtains of her neighbors' houses were dancing as hands hurriedly pulled them aside to get a good look at me. I drove directly to the armory.

Ray Mosby was rather apologetically conducting a panel on the responsibilities of "the non-commissioned officer" when I entered the upstairs classroom. He interrupted himself to say, "Have a seat, Sam," and went on with his talk. It was a dull subject and he knew it, but army headquarters had placed it on the training schedule and it must be done. When Colonel Cozzens entered the classroom, Ray stopped talking with a smile of obvious relief. We weren't called to attention.

The Colonel put his right foot in a chair and rested a hand on the upraised knee.

"Now boys," he said, "some of you want to go to church, so I'll make my talk short." He cleared his throat. "You sixteen men have been chosen for non-com schooling by me personally. I know your families and I know you and I know you're the kind of boys I want for non-coms.

"So, here're the few words I have to say on how to be a good non-com. You must never take anything for granted. You must see to it that your orders are carried out to the fullest, but if you have to shout or nag at your men to get your orders carried out, you're a failure. A kind but firm approach, seems to me, is about the only way you can get anything done."

The Colonel paused. "Now, when we go to camp this summer, you men will be getting a couple of stripes. And I want you to understand this: the first time I find out that any of you are using profanity in giving orders, or if you try yelling at your boys, I'll break you down to private again. I want a good regiment and I don't think I'll have one if I have loud, profane non-coms."

He cleared his throat. "Did Sam Gifford get here, Ray?"

Ray nodded and pointed to where I was sitting.

"I'd like a few words with you, if you please, Sam," the Colonel said. "All right, boys, thanks for coming. That's all."

Raker and Carr turned around as we got to our feet. Both of them started to grin, but changed their minds. I winked at them.

"When he gets through with you," Carr said, "you'll be wishing he'd a went ahead and bawled you out. I got one of them talks of his once. Makes you feel like two cents."

"I think I know what you mean," I said.

I followed the Colonel outside. Even in his uniform he was by no stretch of the imagination a military man. He looked like exactly what he was, a cotton planter. He had joined the National Guard in his youth because it was expected of him. He had done his work well because it was also expected of him. The promotions which came regularly always surprised him. And when the Governor offered him command of the Regiment, Colonel Cozzens debated a long time before he accepted. He wasn't sure he liked soldiering that much.

It was dark outside and there was a big cloud working up from the east. We leaned against one of the new six-by-six trucks. But now that he had me outside, the Colonel didn't know how to begin.

"Looks like we might have a little rain," he said.

I gave the cloud a thorough study. "Yessir," I said studiously, "looks like it."

"Wet summer."

"Yessir."

"Felix tells me he's taking you in partners with'im."

"Yessir, I begin in the morning."

"I sort of wanted to do the same with Bill Joe," the Colonel said softly, "but he got the flying bug." He cleared his throat. "Non-com school's pretty dull, isn't it?"

"Well. . . ." I stopped.

"Ray'll liven it up. He'll make a good officer, some of these days—when the times comes that we'll need good officers."

"Yessir."

"Jenny tells me y'all went swimming this afternoon."

"Yessir."

"Have a good time?"

"Yessir, I believe Jenny enjoyed it. The pool out there's a lot cooler than the Park."

"Very peculiar thing . . ." the Colonel mused. "Bill Joe and I've always been friends, but Jenny's always been my baby girl. Hard to realize that she's a grown woman now." He cleared his throat. "I've always hoped that she'd be a lady."

"She is, sir. And more too."

The Colonel chuckled in the darkness. "She likes you a lot too, Sam."

We strolled back into the armory and into the harsh glare of the lighted drill court. "Turn out some of these lights, will you please, Ray," the Colonel called. "Let's don't waste money just because it isn't ours we're spending."

We waited a moment while Ray went to the switch box and snapped out most of the court lights.

"I haven't been in the water in five, six years," the Colonel said.

"Go out and try the pool anytime you want to, sir. Poppa'd be glad for you to."

"I'll do that," he murmured. He glanced down at the floor. "How're you getting along at the gin?"

"A little slow, I think."

He smiled. "You'll catch on," he said. "By the way, Felix called my office to tell you he was taking his car. Uh—Jenny'll pick you up in Bill Joe's little car."

"All right, sir. Thank you."

Jenny was waiting in Bill Joe's Ford convertible. She helped me fold the top back. As we started to drive away, Raker and Carr passed and Carr called out with strained heartiness:

"Hey, Sam! That the way you're going to get those stripes?"

"Can't think of a better way," I called.

When we had moved away, Jenny said, "Who were they?"

"Just a couple of boys that work at the gin."

She looked at me carefully. "Are you friendly with them?"

"Oh—I don't know," I said. "I guess so. Why?"

"They just acted like they wanted you to be friendly, that's all."

"Did they?"

She smiled. "Yes, they did."

I was vaguely disturbed. It had never occurred to me that Raker and Carr, or any of the others who worked at the gin, would be any more interested in me than I was in them.

We stopped at Wingate's Drugstore and then we drove to the Bottom, where the flat land and long rows of cotton gleamed under the moon. We drove to Hogback Ridge and parked.

"Do you always bring your girls up here?"

"No, I haven't been up here since I was fifteen."

She nestled comfortably under my arm and we talked about the possibility of a mobilization of the Guard. Sometimes we let minutes pass before we spoke and it was during those many pauses that I was most acutely aware of her warmth. She smelled of perfume and her hair was clean and sweet. Her arms were plump and round. We sat tensely still for a long time before she spoke.

"What time is it?"

I struck a match. "Two fifteen." I lit a cigarette.

"Daddy'll be upset."

"He talked to me tonight."

"What'd he say?"

"We talked about the weather, Poppa, swimming and Jenny."

"I told him we went swimming. What'd he say about me?"

"He said you were his baby girl."

She laughed softly. "I was seven years old before I would go to sleep without his rocking me."

"I think he was a little shocked because I took you out there instead of the Park."

She laughed again. "So was Mother." She looked up at me. "And so was Sam."

I said nothing.

She pinched my arm, hard. "Sam, stop being bashful with me. You don't have to—not with me."

I kissed her. "I won't be anymore."

She murmured something softly and then, wildly, she hugged me.

The wind freshened with a heavy gust and the pine trees on the Ridge swished loudly. She shuddered with delight and when I asked her if she were cold, she murmured no and pushed herself closer to me. A few drops of rain fell on us and she sat upright until I put the canvas top back over us. I cranked the window up on the windward side and we sat in the rain until dawn. We were cool, cozy and dry.

She was so tender and gentle that my throat tightened and I wanted wildly to make love to her, but I was so stricken by her that I could make no move at all in that direction. We kissed until our lips hurt and she was moaning softly, but I could only keep my hands where they belonged.

We stayed there until the rain stopped and dawn came. The sun, when it first showed over the horizon, was clean and yellow after the rain.

"I'll bet the Colonel and your mother're beginning to worry about us."

She yawned. "Probably."

"I'll tell them you were out with an older man."

She yawned again and buried her face in the hollow of my shoulder. "As long's I'm with Felix Gifford's son, all is right with the world, Daddy, and Mother."

But we gave up and went home. Jenny was too sleepy to drive and I let her out at her house and drove Bill Joe's car home. Her heels pecked sharply as she hurried up the walk, stopped on the porch, made an exaggerated yawn, threw me a kiss, and disappeared into the house.

Poppa, who always arises at dawn, summer or winter, was reading his *Gazette* when I entered the kitchen.

"Kind of late, isn't it?" he said casually.

"Yessir," I said sheepishly, "it's pretty late, all right."

"Who were you with?"

"Jenny."

"Jenny who?"

"Jenny Cozzens."

"Hmmm. I didn't know that little girl was old enough to stay out all night."

"Well—uh, I don't guess she really is. She's nineteen." Then I remembered what he had said to me this morning. "Aw, Poppa, you knew who I was out with."

"Whom I was out with."

"Whom."

"Just joking, Son," he said and folded his paper. "Sit down and I'll fry you an egg. You look like you could use a little something to eat."

"Make that three eggs," I said. "I've never been so hungry in my life."

We were silent for a while, but Poppa, as he spooned sizzling grease on my eggs, gave me a few sly, examining looks from the corner of his eye. He put the eggs in front of me, put bread in the toaster, and got a tall glass of tomato juice from the refrigerator. He poured a cup of coffee for me. He went back to his *Gazette*.

"When I was a young man," he said from behind his paper, "not every young man wore lipstick." He ruffled the paper and turned a page. "Instead of beginning work today, you'd better get some sleep. I can't teach you much in your condition."

"Yessir. Thank you." I finished wiping lipstick off my face.

"I presume you'll be going out again tonight?"

"Yessir, I think so."

"If I were you," Poppa said carefully, "I'd try to arrange my hours so I could get a little sun. According to what I see in the paper here, sunshine is a source of one of the most important vitamins."

"Yessir, I'll do that."

"And there's also the danger of getting your daily schedule so mixed up that you won't be able to sleep at nighttime as long as you live."

"I'll be careful."

He got up, folded his paper, went to his den and came back carrying several pages of legal-sized paper. He uncapped his pen and handed paper and pen to me.

"Sign."

"What is it, Poppa?"

"No need reading it. It's just something making our partnership legal. You now own half of the gin, half of the farm, a quarter of the Gray Chevrolet Company—half of my half—and half of my stock in the bank."

I signed.

He shoved another paper under the pen. "That's the deed to that lot in the next block. Not that you're going to be building a house, but now that you're a man of property, you can pay the taxes on it."

I signed again.

"You owe me five dollars. Pay up."

Stunned, I fumbled for my wallet and handed him the money. "Poppa—" I began.

That was the only time in my life that I had ever seen tears in Poppa's eyes.

7

Although Jenny and I didn't become a subject of gossip, we were somewhat of an embarrassment to our parents. Both the Giffords and the Cozzens wanted to be as broad-minded as was possible about it, but when, for the three following afternoons, we swam in the pool at our farm, and when we stayed out until dawn for an equal number of nights, our parents looked at us with questioning and worried eyes. Bill Joe, who came home Tuesday afternoon, and in whom I

had confided since we had been children together, was occupying a position he didn't relish at all. His sister's honor and our friendship were at fore and Bill Joe solved it in a manner typical of him. He avoided me, and Jenny too.

"Has your family said anything to you yet?"

"Nooo," she said. We were resting on the slanting rock. "How about yours?"

"No, but they'd like to."

She was brushing her hair and when the breeze caused the pines to part and let the sunlight into the pool, her hair glistened with the copper that only the sun could expose.

"They probably think I'm a fallen woman."

I felt my face warm and I quickly turned away and tossed pebbles into the pool. They fell with gentle splashes that couldn't be heard because of the murmuring falls.

She stopped brushing. "Oh, Sam, did I embarrass you?"

"No," I said, "of course not." But I couldn't look at her.

She was strange and still for a few moments, and then with a laugh she put her feet in the small of my back and shoved. Before I could rise to the surface she was upon me, alternately enclosing me with convulsive embraces with her arms and legs and kicking me deeper into the water. If the water hadn't softened the blows, it would have been brutal. But whether I was hurt or not, I was about to drown. My lungs were aching sharply and I had to jerk hard at her arms and legs to break free so I could come up for breath.

"Hey!" I yelled. I had no idea of what had suddenly come over her.

As an answer, she splashed water in my face and laughed before she struck out in the direction of the thicket. I caught her on the gravel bar, but she pulled free and ran into the thicket. I caught her not far from the rusted beer tub and we wrestled briefly before we both fell. She was full length on the pine needles and I was on top of her. The merry smile on her face abruptly faded. Slowly she relaxed.

"Jenny?"

She smiled dreamily and took my face into her hands and kissed me. "Will anybody see us here?"

It was a quick, piercing act that, at its height, paralyzed both of us, and Jenny uttered a tiny cry before she lay still. She had been a virgin.

We lay side-by-side for long minutes before either of us moved. Jenny fumbled for my hand and held it over her heart, which was pounding heavily. Then she dropped her hands to her sides and sighed quietly. After a long time—it might have been a half hour—she gestured for her suit and draped it over her thighs. She smiled lazily.

"Did I hurt you?" I asked.

She took a breath and nodded. "But it's all right. It seemed to make me love you that much more."

I put my arm under her and rolled her against me.

"Jenny," I began—and fumbled for the unfamiliar words: "I love you."

She ran her fingers lightly over my face. "I've always loved you, Sam," she murmured in my ear.

I got to my feet. "Come on," I said abruptly. "Get dressed."

She sat up quickly. "What is it, Sam?"

"I'm going to talk to the Colonel about us."

She smiled. "You scared me."

As we drove to town Jenny stretched her legs out and rested her head against the back of the seat. "That sure does make you relax, doesn't it?" she said wonderingly. "My arms and legs feel as heavy as lead."

I loved her so much that it made my heart pound. And she—relaxed here with an intimacy that had once seemed so remote—had given herself to me without a murmur of dissent.

"Do you want to get married right now?" she said. "Or do you want a church wedding?"

"Right now," I said. "Uh—if you want to."

She nodded and laughed. "You're going to make an honest woman of me, aren't you?"

"Don't talk like that, Jenny."

She hugged my arm. "All right," she said. "I won't." She kissed me passionately.

8

WE SPENT OUR honeymoon at Poppa's hunting and fishing cabin at Lake Norfolk.

I taught Jenny how to use a casting rod, a knack which she picked up with little trouble, and hoped that she would catch a fish the first time. She didn't, but we tried again before dark and she hooked a four-pound bass, a fish bigger by half a pound than anything I had ever caught. She carefully played the fish as I instructed; not once did she scream. She insisted on removing the plug from the mouth of the fish and she did so without a grimace.

"What'll I do with it?"

I tossed the stringer to her and told her how to run the holder through the lower jaw. Once the fish was securely locked on, she dropped it into the bottom of the boat, put her glasses on, and bent forward to admire it.

We swam in the lagoon every morning, using the anchored boat as a diving float, and Jenny was soon tan, which made her even more beautiful. She was an excellent swimmer, better than I for short stretches. Once, after she repeated the performance of kicking and punching me as she had done at the pool, we made love in the boat. We snickered and giggled like children when two fishermen went past and wondered out loud, over the noise of their motor, if somebody had deliberately left his boat this far from the bank.

After the fishermen were gone, Jenny giggled and said, "I'll bet they'd die if they'd known we were in the bottom of that boat!"

"We ought to be more careful."

"Oh Sam! Don't be so *dignified!*" She wrinkled her face in a happy grimace. "Sam, I'm so happy!"

A week later I carved "Sam loves Jenny" on the log above the fireplace, and added: "June, 1941," and we went home.

9

BECAUSE I HAD stored away a fair knowledge of the mechanics of ginning in the process of growing up with it, I found it not impossible to find my way about the maze of gears, belts and drive shafts. The grading of cotton—Poppa was also a cotton broker—was another matter. Although Poppa spent many hours plucking samples from the stacks of bales in the compress and pulling and tugging until he thought he had found a length of fiber or a kink that would demonstrate to my apparently unseeing eyes a certain grade of cotton, I remained unschooled. Cotton was cotton.

Old man Carr, Kenny's father, who had worked at the gin when my grandfather had owned it, put my slowness down to education. "'Pears to me that them four years you spent at books is done you more harm'n good."

Jenny and I didn't discuss the building of our house as we should have. It never occurred to me that there were other styles of architecture. The barnlike colonial I had been born in was a good enough style for me to die in. Jenny protested, but not strenuously enough to make me change my mind. We drew a rough floor plan for a two-storied house and handed it to old man Kelton, who, having built a dozen on Oak Street almost exactly like it, glanced at the plan and threw it away. Our house was to have but one fixture not found in any other house on Oak Street: a forced-ventilation attic fan, which aroused considerable interest and made me feel that I might be building a house too modern

for Gray's Landing. A glance at Ray Mosby's house, which was next door, should have convinced me of the opposite. Jenny was the one who could have kept me from building the house, but she kept quiet. Only once, jokingly, did she accuse me of glorying in my conservatism.

Poppa and the Colonel visited the site every afternoon. They stood on the lawn and assumed poses of genial satisfaction.

When old man Kelton finished the rough work on the house, we moved in. The finishing work was done with our new, Victorian furniture already in the house. We were glad to be sleeping in our own home because Jenny was very nervous about staying in the room where I had grown up. She was absolutely certain that Poppa and Momma could hear us, and our love-making became so inhibited that it made us both somewhat afraid. When we moved into our own bedroom, our love once again assumed the intensity we had enjoyed during our honeymoon.

I continued to apply myself to the work at the gin and it wasn't long until Poppa expressed guarded satisfaction with my cotton grading. We thereafter bent our efforts toward getting the gin ready for a huge cotton crop this fall. Raker and Carr worked harder than any two men we had, but they didn't respond to my overtures of friendship. They were friendly enough during Guard drill, but they held themselves back at the gin. And it was Carr who brought about the only unpleasant incident I remember of those gentle days:

Every afternoon at 2:30, Poppa gave the employees a 15-minute recess for coffee. I usually had my coffee in the office with Poppa. But one afternoon during the late days of July, Poppa had to go to Little Rock. I got my thermos of coffee and hunted out Raker and Carr, who always met near the press to drink and loaf. I noticed a quick exchange of glances when I sat down with them, but I thought it was an expression of surprise. I twisted the top off my thermos and filled it with coffee. Raker and Carr both kept their heads down. They said nothing.

"Wonder when the Colonel's going to give us those stripes he's been talking about," I said.

Carr raised his head gave me a cool, level look. "I wouldn't know, Sam," he said. "Why, don't you know? He's your father-in-law, not mine."

My heart tripped heavily and I knew my face had turned white. I was rejected for the first time in my life and I couldn't take it.

"I guess," I said tightly, "he's the one I ought to ask." I floundered and went on: "I'll see him before drill tonight, and—"

"Look, Sam," Carr said tartly, "me'n Raker ain't came to your office to drink coffee with you. Looks to me like you ought to have that much respect for us and our private life."

It hurt me and both Carr and Raker knew it, but they both looked stubbornly determined to keep me at the employer's distance.

I opened my mouth to speak and said nothing. Then: "I'm—I guess—I'm sorry."

They both lowered their heads. I picked up my thermos and hurried back to the office. The secretary thought I was sick, but I made her leave me alone. I sat in my plush office chair and trembled with an emotion I had never experienced before. I was determined that nobody at this gin would ever again have an opportunity to treat me that way again.

I never mentioned it to Jenny. Neither Raker nor Carr ever showed sign that it had happened. We remained distantly friendly at Monday-night drill.

Aside from that momentary friction, I worked at the gin without incident. Poppa, without discussing it with me, gave me a good salary. He didn't like to discuss money because he considered it ungentlemanly.

"I deposited your salary at the bank, Son," he murmured when the first of the month came.

I received $400 a month and Poppa wrote me a formal letter to the effect that we would divide the remaining profits at the end of the year. That, with half of the profits from our other holdings, put me among the wealthy of Gray's Landing.

When I went to the bank to make the first payment on my house I was handed the deed, stamped PAID. Poppa, of course.

Colonel Cozzens gave us a Cadillac for a wedding present. Though both Jenny and I felt self-conscious in it, we kept it for fear of hurting the Colonel's feelings.

Old man Kelton completed the finishing work on our house by the end of July. He hung around until Jenny had thanked him more than profusely for having it ready a full month ahead of schedule. The house was set back deeply into the lot and there were, of course, several—nine—oaks on the front lawn. I carried Jenny across the threshold and we initiated, again, the master bedroom.

We bought a radio-phonograph, which was too expensive, but we excused ourselves by saying that it was better to buy the best if we wanted to enjoy our music. Jenny brought her own record collection from the Cozzens' house. It contained composers I had never heard of: Hindemith, de Falla, Berlioz, Stravinsky, Copland.

"So this's what you learned at Miss Belle's?"

"Yep. Like it?"

"I'm not sure. . . ."

I added my own Brahms, Beethoven, Handel and Schubert to the collection, which made it, we agreed, good enough for a start.

I insisted on doing the work in my den with my own hands. It had old-fashioned oak panels (stained dark) and a heavy, roll-top desk which contained a profusion of pigeonholes and drawers. I covered the floor with a dark brown rug. I brought my old leather-covered reading chair from Poppa's house.

And my marriage richened, which I would have thought impossible. Our love making became more practiced, less intense, yet it assumed a deeper, more satisfying passion. Jenny became alarmingly easy to arouse, but when I talked to Doc Wingate about it he laughed and said Jenny was nothing more than a healthy, passionate young American woman and not at all abnormal.

"I got another explanation too," Doc added, "but it isn't very scientific. She's in love with you. Why? Hell, I don't know. But with another man, she might be completely frigid. You're going to find out, young man, that women are just pretty damn strange about sex. So don't you worry about Jenny. She's just fine." . . .

On the first day of September, Colonel Cozzens had his orders from Washington. We National Guardsmen had two weeks to get our private affairs in order before we were called into federal service.

If I had been more solidly settled into my new role of husband and businessman, the sudden wrenching from my comfortable niche might have had disastrous results. As it was, I suffered enough. I had joined the National Guard as a favor for Colonel Cozzens—a pompous enough reason—and now I felt imposed upon. But I took it with grace. After all, Ray Mosby and I reasoned—and Colonel Cozzens agreed—this could only be regarded as unpleasant 18-month interlude which could later be looked back upon as an experience for what it was worth—nothing. "Lots of people've wasted that much, just horsing around," Ray said. Our careers, our various degrees of domesticity would have to suffer an interruption; but it wouldn't last forever.

Five months later, the Regiment was aboard ship in a convoy bound for Australia.

The high, sunny days passed, each charged with fearful gloom as the PA system kept us informed of the progress of the war. The Japs had wrecked Allied shipping at Darwin; we had lost the Battle of the Java Sea; in March all of Indonesia and New Guinea were open to occupation by the little men who, we had predicted, wouldn't last more than six months.

On the last day of March we reached Australia and were soon camped in a meadow behind a small southwestern port town. In April, Jap carrier planes demolished the British naval base at Colombo in Ceylon.

It was during the same month that I heard the first cheerful news of the year. Doolittle's B-25's bombed Tokyo, a gesture that wasn't as ineffectual as it was later thought to be, for it proved that the Japs weren't playing a game we couldn't play too.

10

The island loomed in the distance, a blue hulk whose mountain made it resemble the silhouette of a grotesque, double-humped camel. It was formidable; it existed as a portion of that other world—the enemy's.

It was early dawn and, just as the tip of the sun showed over the horizon, the Naval bombardment stopped and the huge convoy was pervaded by an onerous silence that made my hands and armpits sweat. The smell that came from the open collar of my fatigue jacket had a curious, acid edge to it. Through my binoculars I saw the beach, but the distance was so great that I could get only a suggestion of the damage done by the bombardment, which had gone on through the previous night and day.

"Sam!" It was Ray Mosby, interrupting a guarded conversation he had been having with the Colonel. "I told you to make the men keep their life jackets on." Then, in a gentler tone, he added: "Keep your eyes open, Sam boy."

Meleski, a sharp-faced, humorous Yankee who'd joined us in California, Saunders and Raker were sitting on their life jackets, waiting sullenly. It was odd, I thought, advancing on them, that these three men's reaction to fear was sullenness.

"Get those life jackets on," I said sharply. Then I grinned and added: "You have enough padding on your butt without them."

They hauled themselves to their feet and slowly dragged the jackets over their shoulders.

A flight of Navy fighters roared, mast high, over the ship and with an insane snarl plunged at a shallow angle toward the beach. In a moment I heard, far away, the seemingly insignificant rattle of their machine guns as they strafed the island. A silence followed.

Four PT boats skittered past, headed for the beach, and after a minute I heard the quiet knocking rattle of their guns, which, to my tense ears, had a tone wholly different from the guns of the planes.

A destroyer glided gracefully across our port side, its bow wave reaching almost to its deck, fired a salvo, gracefully heeled over and rejoined the flotilla at our rear.

"First assault wave," said a still-sleepy voice on the PA system, which sounded peculiarly dry so early in the morning, *"prepare to board landing craft."*

"All right," I said quietly, my voice carrying easily in the morning air. I nodded to Kenny. "Eighteen men to the boat."

"I know it," Kenny said sharply, his temper frayed.

Ray Mosby called to me. "Sam! Make sure they keep their life jackets on."

"All right, Ray," I said, as irritated with him as Kenny had been with me.

We filed to the rail and stood quietly, waiting for the order to climb into the boats, which hung loosely from their cables.

"Wonder if we'll have it as rough as the Marines did on Guadalcanal?" somebody murmured.

"Forget the Marines," I said, mad as hell. "You'd be better off worrying about yourself." I heard no answer, only the scuffle of several pairs of feet.

Colonel Cozzens pressed forward, shaking hands with the men as he came through. "Now you boys listen to me," he said quietly in the early morning air. "Be sure you mind your officers and non-coms. It's going to be rough there"—he thumbed toward the island—"but you'll have a better chance of coming through if you'll mind your officers and non-coms."

"First assault wave," came the dry PA voice again, *"board landing craft."*

We filed into position. "Good luck, son," the Colonel murmured to each man filing past. "Good luck. God bless you, son. Be careful. Don't take any unnecessary chances. Good luck. God bless you, son."

I clambered up on the railing, but the landing craft chose that moment to sway away from the ship. I hesitated.

"Jump, soldier," the coxswain said quietly, encouragingly, from his perch. "You won't miss."

I jumped and tumbled into the bottom of the boat. I recovered and turned to help those who followed me. In the other boat I heard Ray encouraging his men.

"Just jump," I called to Kenny. "I'll keep you from falling."

Kenny jumped and I caught his arm in time to prevent his falling. He smelled strongly of sweat. He quietly made his way to the front of the troop well and stood waiting while I helped the others aboard. We were lowered into the water and the coxswain started the engine, which billowed diesel fumes over the water and into the troop well. The boat pulled away from the ship and the fumes were blown away.

"Can we smoke?" Raker asked.

"Go ahead," I said.

The ship was as large as a mountain from this vantage point, but I could see only the two humps of the island. Overhead, the sun had risen and grown into a ball as bright as stainless steel. Ray's boat was 30 yards away and I could see him peering, not toward the island, but at a dark gray ship that had materialized behind us. It was a destroyer-escort, which slowly inched its way through the flotilla of landing craft until it was 50 yards ahead of us. A figure brandishing a megaphone appeared on the fantail.

"We—will—lead—you—in," he called. *"When—you—are—close—enough—to—see—the—beach—wave—your—arms."* His voice carried faintly but clearly over the calm water.

Ray acknowledged with a wave. The D-E moved forward and we followed closely. From the bridge of the D-E a signal lamp blinked four quick dots and the bombardment began again. First there was the distant thundering roll of the guns, then the pause, the wild, roaring swish of the shells going overhead, and, far away, the crash of the explosion on the beach. Looking to my left and right, I counted 20 landing craft, which carried the men of the first wave; a pathetic few, I thought. As we drew closer to the island, the volume of the explosions grew until I thought the next one, if it were louder, would burst my head.

A wind rose and made the water swell and roll gently. Saunders vomited with a harsh, dry sound that immediately made Webster sick too. Although not a single one of the 18 men moved, I said, "Keep your heads down." The coxswain, perched high behind his wheel, seemed to be in complete ignorance of the danger of the situation; he was preoccupied with maintaining the proper interval between his boat and those on each side of him.

The blast of the bombardment continued to grow until, with the same quick four blinks of its signal lamp, the D-E stopped it.

"What'd they stop shooting for?" Raker looked up at me and said.

"We're getting pretty close," I said.

"Oh God," Webster murmured wretchedly. He was pale, his lips were blue and his chin trembled.

From the corner of my eye I saw Ray wave toward the fantail of the D-E, which promptly dropped a smoke pot into the water and made a shallow turn toward the open sea. I

peered at the beach through my binoculars, seeing it plainly now. From the water's edge to a distance of a hundred yards, there was nothing but twisted, spintered palms and heaped, tossed sand. A thin ribbon of smoke slithered gracefully, peacefully into the sky from a small fire the bombardment had started. The beach was less than a hundred yards away.

My throat was tight and dry and I swallowed with some effort. But I wasn't sweating now; my hands were dry and warm. And I was steady and calm; icy, tautly calm.

"Okay, Sarge," the coxswain called—casually calm—from his exposed perch.

"On your feet!" I called.

Only Webster failed to rise.

"Kenny! Get Web up!"

"Get up, Web," Kenny said. "Get up, boy! *God damn you,* GET UP!"

Webster rose shakily and attempted to nod so I would know he was ready, but all he could manage was a few convulsive jerks of his head. He was so gray and blue-lipped he appeared to be a clumsily made-up clown.

"Here we gooooooooooooooo!" The sailor was so calm that he seemed foolish.

There came a heavy crunch as the boat struck the sand, followed immediately by the metallic rattle of the ramp as it fell to permit our exit.

I took a deep breath. *"Let's go!"* I yelled hoarsely.

I sprinted madly over the fluffy sand and didn't stop running until I reached a heavy log, 30 yards from the water. Only then did I turn to see what the others had done. They were crouched behind me.

"Spread out!" I yelled.

They huddled closer.

"Spread out!"

They moved slowly, as if each of them drew behind him an inert, invisible shadow that dogged his every track. They glared at me with scared, accusing eyes, hating me viciously. I cursed them with every obscenity I had ever heard. To my right I heard Ray Mosby doing the same.

"Sam," Kenny called softly, "Web didn't come."

I glanced back at the yawning mouth of the boat and saw Webster, huddled into a corner of the troop well, his back to the beach. The coxswain waited patiently for me to come after Webster. I rushed across the sand and charged into the troop well, grabbed Webster by his collar and jerked him erect. He slumped. Carefully leaning my rifle against the bulkhead, I held Webster by his collar, at arm's length, and kicked his butt as brutally hard as I could.

"Get moving, you yellow bastard!" I gritted.

And he moved. Every time he stumbled, I kicked him again. Webster whimpered, but he didn't protest my kicks. I shoved him into Kenny's arms.

"Keep him moving," I said quietly.

Not a shot had been fired.

"Now keep your interval, you stupid sons!" I shouted hoarsely. "LET'S GO!"

I sprang across the log and raced across the broken beach until I reached a depression, a shell hole, deep enough to shelter all of us. The men scattered themselves around the hole.

"That's more like it," I growled roughly.

For a brief instant I was amazed by the dreamy clarity of the scene and at my own calmness. Kenny, his hand clutching a twisted collar, was dragging Webster behind him. Webster dropped his rifle and Kenny, calmly, tenderly, looped the sling around Webster's neck and nodded that they were ready to go.

"All the way this time!" I yelled.

Before the murk of the jungle closed around me, I turned and saw the landing craft of the second wave hitting the beach. I tore through the jungle the way a drowning man flays at water and I didn't stop until I reached the abrupt rise of the 30-foot ridge that was our first objective. We were, according to the briefing, 200 yards from the beach.

I felt totally exhausted.

Flat on my stomach, I looked down the ridge and saw my men. They were in position. I looked into the jungle ahead of me. There was nothing. There was no movement at all. And, except for our harsh breathing, a silence seemed to drift ahead of us and on into a deeper silence beyond. The final objective of the day was a hundred yards into that silence.

I could see it. Rather I could see a cone-shaped thickening in the jungle. I got to my feet, as much to take a deep breath as to impress my men with my bravery.

"All right," I said calmly, "we'll walk the rest of the way."

They docilely stumbled to their feet and obediently tumbled down the far side of the ridge. Calmly and easily, I hated them. Like sheep, I thought. If you had any guts or brains, you'd tell me to go straight to hell.

Webster collapsed at the bottom of the ridge. I rushed back, insane with anger, and jerked him erect.

"I'll kick you every step of the way, Web," I hissed, "if you don't straighten up and act like a man."

He slowly raised his head and gave me a bleary, exhausted stare that unsuccessfully tried to hide a hatred that would never dissolve. He nodded weakly; he stumbled forward. Kenny reached to help him.

"Keep your hands off him, Carr!" I said. "If he's not man enough to make it by himself, we'll leave him right here."

And then, a moment that burned itself into my memory so deeply that it will remain forever, Kenny looked at me with frank, open admiration.

"Yeah," I growled sourly, "I'm the boy, all right."

Kenny smiled, then grinned.

And so we walked to our objective. The strength it took to climb the hill, a cone-shaped knoll that rose out of the jungle to a height of 40 feet, almost finished me. But when Webster again collapsed, with a loud wail akin to the sound made by a frightened rabbit, halfway up the hill, I forgot my exhaustion.

"Get on your feet!" I called down to him, standing completely erect, entirely forgetful of what a fine target I was making.

Webster moved, but he couldn't get to his feet.

"All right then," I called down, "crawl! That's more your speed."

Webster rolled over and pulled himself up on his hands and knees.

"That's it," I sneered, "crawl! *Crawl!"*

And he started crawling.

I turned to the men and snarled, "Get to digging."

The men had been waiting for me to give the order!

They fell to work quickly, but quietly, and I caught several of the same admiring glances Kenny had flashed on me back in the jungle. Kenny went to work on the hole we were to share and before long he was drenched with sweat, but he dug steadily until he had a hole deep enough to hide both of us.

Ray Mosby's detail clambered up and set about digging holes which were to face inland. There were 37 of us now and a change came over me. I had cursed my men, had even kicked Webster and had threatened him. And I was ashamed. I had done exactly as the Colonel had specifically instructed his non-coms not to do. I walked over to where Webster was frantically digging and squatted down beside him. He didn't acknowledge my presence.

"I don't know why I did it, Web."

He raised his head now. He was still gray and blue-lipped, but he was hating me with bright, steady eyes that seemed to go through me. His chin was trembling.

"Some of these days, Sam," he said, his voice somehow made more deadly by its unsteadiness, "you'll be sorry for treating me like that."

From the next hole, Raker said flatly, "I say you done right, Sam."

"I won't forget you neither, Rake," Webster said and went back to his digging.

"That's all right with—" Raker stopped when I shook my head.

"That ain't all neither," Webster said, continuing to dig, "Carr'll rue the day he ever drug *me* around."

I went to the center of the perimeter, where Saunders was digging Ray's foxhole. Ray was setting up a mortar, its tube straight up.

"Hear you had a little trouble with Webster," Ray murmured absently.

"Yeah," I said, "I did. And I made it worse."

"Did, huh? How's that?"

"I kicked him. Cussed him, too."

He glanced up. "I wouldn't worry about it. The other men told me you did a first-rate job."

"That still doesn't make it right."

He stomped the mortar base into the ground. "I did a little kicking and cussing myself. That guy Fromage tried to yellow-out on us. I kicked his tail till he got so mad he dared me to kick him again." Ray dusted his hands. "I kicked so hard then that he fell down, but when he got up he got back in line and stayed there." He grinned suddenly. "Went over to apologize a minute ago and he didn't know what I was talking about. I think he thought *I'd* gone crazy."

As far as I was concerned, the first shot of World War II was fired immediately after Ray finished speaking. My neck was wrenched back and around; in my right ear was a heavy, clanging sound that I had never heard before. I landed on my back with a breath-jarring thump. My helmet was gone.

"Damn!"

There was nothing in sight but several protruding rumps, for the men had fallen into the half-finished foxholes. Ray appeared over me.

"You all right, Sam?" he asked anxiously.

I struggled to a squatting position. "What the hell happened?"

Ray handed me my helmet. A bullet had struck the front of it and, because of the angle of entry, it had followed the inside contour, making a complete circle around my head before it went out the same hole it had made in entering.

The firing began. Bullets zipped sharply across the knoll. I jumped into my foxhole with Kenny. There were four Japs shooting at us, but I couldn't locate them. They were inland from us, but that was all I could be certain of. Each of the four Japs fired five times and that was all. I crawled out of my hole.

"Get'em to digging, Sam," Ray said.

I made the rounds, urging the men on, but they didn't need it. Their holes deepened, the three machine guns were set up and the BARmen had established their lanes of fire quicker than the record had been in training. Only one man, Fromage, was loafing. He was seated comfortably in his half-dug foxhole and on his face was a silly grin, the kind he would have given a teacher had she caught him red-handed in some devilment or another.

He was dead.

I closed my eyes and, for no good reason, thought how I had remembered his name; in French, it meant cheese. A boy from Louisiana who had never had much to say, who had been scared but had forgotten the butt kicking Ray had given him. I was thankful—and ashamed of being so—that he wasn't from Gray's Landing.

"Ray," I called.

Ray hurried over and peered into the foxhole. "Oh, my God," Ray prayed softly. He recovered quickly enough to add: "Get a detail and bury him. I'll make a record of the grave location."

Raker, Meleski and I dug a hole and, before we placed the body in it, I removed his dog tags and emptied his pockets, which contained a packet of letters, a penknife, a steel washer, and 25 cents.

"Hey!" Kenny said. "Where's Web?"

Immediately the fury of the beach assault came back to me. "If that yellow—" I began. Then I remembered. "Forget about Webster," I said loudly. "If he wants to spend the night alone out there, it's his own business."

Webster burst out of the jungle and scampered up the knoll. He was cursing wildly and most of it was directed at me. He wasn't carrying a rifle. I was waiting for him.

"If you're so hell-bent on getting revenge, Web," I said, "I'll see that you get your chance when the campaign's over."

Webster shuffled away to his foxhole.

The death of Fromage had frightened the others. They deepened their holes and watched the jungle with a fear so intense I could smell it. Except for occasional outbursts of a suddenly wild temper, I remained calm.

When we finished eating our K-rations, Ray asked for men to take on a patrol. He found no volunteers. He appointed two men from each squad.

They returned two hours later without having heard or seen another human, although they did find what had evidently been a Jap camp. When Ray reported his find on the radio, Colonel Cozzens himself, sounding stern and calm, answered with the information that the Japs had fallen back but that George Company had located them. "They're making their way back toward us," he added.

"Looks like we can expect a little trouble tonight," Ray announced.

Not a word was said. And I remembered the lectures on the Jap's prowess as a night fighter.

"Well," Ray went on. "Sam, send six men back for grenades; each man carry two cases. Send six men for flare shells; tell them to carry all they can."

I sent Ralston, Raker and Carr as the non-coms and they selected the men they wanted. They returned an hour before dark, only a few minutes before Ray planned to send a patrol out to check on them. They were loaded with ammunition. They reported that they had seen no live Japs, but they had found two dead ones on the trail.

"Just lying on the trail?" Ray asked.

"Yeah," Raker said. "Looked like they'd both bled to death. They both had some mighty big holes in'em."

"Probably the bombardment," I said.

Kenny said. "All that shelling and all we're sure it killed is just two Japs."

11

WE HEARD THE VOICE not long after the darkness had become complete. I was supposed to keep watch while Kenny Carr slept, but we were both standing in the hole, alert and tense. It was so dark, at first, that it made no difference whether my eyes were open or closed; the clouds obscured the stars. It was almost two hours after darkness before my eyes became able to see vaguely the shapes of the trees above my head. The voice, when it came, spoke no words. It sounded as if someone were humming, open-mouthed, the first two notes of minor-keyed song.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeooooooooooooooo," it said softly.

There was a storm of clicks as each man released the safety on his rifle. I reached for the row of grenades on the shelf of my hole.

"What was that?" Kenny whispered sharply from not more than two inches away. His breath left moisture in my ear.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeoooooooooooooooooooo," it came again, sad and slow. *"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeooooooooooooooo."* It was so quiet, even sweet, that it made my ears strain and ache to hear more of it, to make certain that it was a human voice. *"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeooooooooooooooooo."*

There was a stirring and rustle of clothing in the hole to

my right and I was afraid, for an instant, that someone was about to run. I strained to remember who was occupying the hole, but I couldn't remember until, shatteringly, he bellowed:

"T'hell with YOU, jack!" It was Meleski.

I wanted to kill him for giving away our position, but at the same time I liked the brassy little Yankee for it.

"Shut up," Ray Mosby said coldly.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeooooooooooooo." And then, quietly, came the words: *"To hell wiss you too, Yank."* The voice continued without interruption from the words it had spoken: *"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeoooooooooooooooo."* And finally said: *"Yank! Oh, Yank! Where you are, Yank?"* I was strangely unafraid.

An M-1 rifle blasted into the night.

"You miss, Yank, but we are know your position." The voice spoke quietly, slowly, as if in great pain. But its weird peacefulness was terminated by several quick blasts—rifles—and flashes of fire, which were pointed into our perimeter.

"FIRE!" Ray roared.

The three machine guns, the three BARs and most of the rifles in the platoon opened fire simultaneously with a continuous roll of blasting thunder. It had never seemed this loud on the firing range. Our guns made the Jap rifles sound weak and ineffective. The Japs stopped firing and, after a few seconds, we did also and the jungle was once again as silent and dark as a cave.

There was no sound except that of our labored breath. The night, after the muzzle flashes, was solid black.

One of our men moaned softly. The sound didn't come from the throat of a man in pain; it was the audible strangulation of fear. The moan came from the direction of Webster's hole.

"Easy, men," Ray called softly.

There was no sound from the enemy.

After a few moments had passed I again became aware of things closer to me. My acid armpits; my peculiar calmness. Somebody was gripping my arm, I became aware, and had been doing so for the past few minutes. It was Kenny. His fingers dug sharply into the muscle between my elbow and shoulder.

"You hurt, Kenny?" I whispered.

"No," he replied calmly. "Why?"

"Turn loose of my arm."

The grip relaxed and then was jerked abruptly away. I heard a quietly hysterical chuckle from him which is the kind of laugh he would muster up for an unfunny joke. Kenny shuddered violently. "You know," he whispered unbelievingly, "I'm nearly scared to death."

"Me too," I whispered.

"You damn sure don't act like it."

"I am, though."

Minutes passed in a silence so absolute that it was difficult to believe 36 men could exist in such a small area without a sound of some kind escaping.

A small scratching noise was the first indication that the Japs were still there. When they had fired on us a while before, I realized now, they had been shooting from the trees, which had placed them on approximately the same level as we were. But this new sound came from below my foxhole.

Turning toward the middle of the perimeter, I cupped my hands over my mouth, making a megaphone, and called quietly, "They're climbing the hill. Ray."

"Roger," Ray said promptly, as calm as he would have been if he had been handing merchandise over the counter of his hardware store. "Yell when you want a flare, everybody."

I heard no further sound for a long time. I thought of Webster and Kenny and Ray, and I thought mostly about Sam Gifford. I knew what had caused my temper today, but I couldn't understand why it had taken that particular form. This calmness was almost a frightening thing in itself, for I knew I wasn't a brave man. And here you are, Sam boy, waiting calmly while Japs crawl around making scratching noises that sound like crayfish inching across linoleum. Nobody ever said you'd have to do this. You live in a small town, have a mapped-out future, married to the town beauty, and you're worried because you know you ought to be scared.

The scratch came again, once to my right, and several times directly in front of me. And this time I recognized it, cloth dragging across a sharp object, a twig or a stone. Kenny twitched and changed the position of his feet. He was standing on my foot and I jerked sharply to make him move. He uttered a short, quivering sigh. I patted his shoulder. The call came from my left:

"FLARE!" somebody shouted hollowly.

Immediately there was the solid *thunk* as the mortar launched the projectile and, for three excruciatingly long seconds, the expected light didn't come. There was a short screaming grunt from the other side of the perimeter and still the darkness remained. When the light finally came, poised two feet in front of me was a Japanese officer; a captain, my mind registered automatically. He held his saber high over his head, like a club, and his lips were drawn and distorted by fanatic courage, revealing his long, slender teeth. His eyes darted quickly in the sudden light and he saw me. He coiled smoothly, an oiled machine of destruction, and the saber began its seemingly slow arc toward my unhelmeted head. Equally slow, I raised the muzzle of my rifle and poked it, sticklike, at the face. As I pulled the trigger I saw another rifle muzzle enter the picture from my right. I heard neither mine nor Kenny's rifle fire; there was a silent blast of powdery flame from each muzzle, both pressed within inches of their target, and the face was revealed next as a round pulp of gore. The faceless head slowly fell backward and out of sight.

From behind the tumbling figure of the Jap officer appeared another face, a clean, smiling one that looked as if it should have appeared in the chorus of *The Mikado*. And to my right, another face, into which Kenny was firing. The mikado rushed at me, laughing merrily as my trigger pulled loosely on an empty magazine. I hadn't heard the ring of the ejecting clip when I had fired into the Jap officer's face.

Both hands clutching a long rifle, the Jap sprang at my hole; and in the flat light of the flare, he appeared to me as an eagle swooping down to smother me. The rifle had, attached to its muzzle, a bayonet, which was pointed with sure accuracy at my stomach. I stepped slowly aside and, tangling my feet with Kenny's, made a graceful arc with the butt of my rifle, which crushed into the chin of the Jap, who sighed softly and fell on top of me. The bayonet was sticking into the foxhole wall behind me. I rammed a clip into my rifle and fired directly into the back of the Jap's head. I glanced down the slope. It was empty.

I whirled about for a look behind me and the rest of the perimeter was revealed in plateau: Ray, his pistol in hand, was preoccupied with dropping another flare into the tube; Webster's hole appeared empty until a Jap stopped directly over it and prepared to fire into it—I killed him with one shot; Raker, his mouth hard and grim, was springing out of his hole to meet, with rifle butt, the charge of a Jap lieutenant. I killed the lieutenant and Raker jumped back into his hole, jamming a clip into his rifle as he moved. Five Japs raced over Webster's hole and headed for Ray.

The first of the five was within a yard of Ray when I fired. The Jap threw up his hands, as the villain in the movie does, grabbed his head and, screaming wildly, wobbled a few steps before he died. Kenny killed the second Jap. Ray himself killed the third and dropped another flare shell into the tube. Raker killed the fourth and fifth Japs.

I jerked back around and looked down the slope. Head down, clawing at the rocks and dirt, very intent on the mechanics of climbing the slope, was another Jap. I shot him squarely in the top of the head. He merely lowered himself to the earth and lay still in a grotesquely natural position of exhaustion. I heard a sudden flurry of firing from the other

side of the perimeter, the mortar *thunked* again, and there was silence. While there was still light, I carefully examined the slope below me. I saw the tossed figures of the dead Japs, one of which had no face. Before the flare died, I saw Ray, standing in his hole with his hands dangling at his sides in the attitude of an exhausted boxer, wipe sweat from his face with his sleeve; I saw only a small part of Webster's back as he fearfully huddled in his hole. I saw Raker close his eyes and sigh. I saw Meleski, his face filthy, puff his cheeks with an exaggerated sigh of relief. On three of the corpses I saw the familiar dirty green of American fatigue uniforms.

The light from the last flare brightened momentarily and flickered out. Nobody spoke at all. There was only the thin whimpering of Webster to break the silence.

12

RAY?"

"Not so loud, man," Ray said. "What is it?"

"Web's in his hole by hisself." It was Raker's voice.

There was a moment of silence. "Sam, do you have a man you can send?"

"I'll go," Kenny whispered.

"Kenny'll do it," I called softly. To Kenny, I said: "If he starts moaning again, slug him."

Kenny grunted acknowledgment.

"Hold your fire," Ray said, "till Kenny's settled." He waited until the rustle of Kenny's crawling had ceased. "You there, Kenny?"

"Yeah."

"All right," Ray said. "If you hear any crawling, everybody, shoot."

The perimeter was silent.

I noticed now, during the dark silence, that I was quivering. Not violently; it was more like the way I would have quivered in the first chill winds of fall, and my fatigues were dripping wet with sweat. I felt strangely self-analytical. The flaws of my heritage were showing now, for only when a man is truly frightened—when he is afraid he is going to die—does he really know himself. The vicious anger I had directed at Webster's failure showed me something, but I couldn't quite identify it. The experience offered the same frustration you suffer when you're within sight of the end of a problem, only to have one small, vital key completely slip your memory. And it seemed important—a duty, the failure of which was somehow rooted in Gray's Landing—that I do my share well and, in the military jargon, "with dispatch." My treatment of Webster this afternoon showed I had failed.

The night was suddenly riddled by the fire of many machine guns and rifles. It came so suddenly that I almost cried out and was already on my feet, ready to fire my own rifle into the jungle below, when I realized, with a peculiar self-disgust, that the firing was coming from Fox Company, 50 yards to my left. During a fractional silence, I heard Webster whimpering again and, beyond that sound, Kenny's voice comforting Webster in low, unfrightened tones. And I realized that I was the one who should have gone to Webster's foxhole.

The firing increased in volume, but the new firing wasn't coming from Fox; it came from George Company, on our right, and from King Company, on the other side of George. The heavy blast of the M-1 rifles was punctuated by the light, seemingly chirping *plink* of the Jap rifles. The jungle shifted and writhed under the flares the three companies were sending up. Shadows crept about the large trees and swelled and dissolved into the darkness of the thick undergrowth.

From both the left and the right, the firing continued spasmodically throughout the night, but Recon didn't fire another shot. Once, an hour before dawn, we heard a Jap raiding party making its way through the jungle, but we didn't fire. A few minutes after we heard the Japs pass our position, the firing on the line stopped entirely. Then, with a cloudy sky, it was dawn.

At the same time an artillery-spotting plane buzzed over our position, looking for targets.

Ray hopped agilely out of his hole and stood erect. He stretched his arms over his head and yawned as if he had spent the night playing poker. There was a thick stubble on his face, which he idly scratched with his thumb and forefinger. He beckoned.

"Well," he yawned, "let's see about damages."

We hadn't taken a step when we heard the artillery coming. It was whistling—not as it does in the movies—and we dived for Ray's foxhole. The shell passed over us and exploded in the jungle, 300 yards ahead. Ray grinned foolishly.

"Ours," he said.

As I pulled my right leg forward to get to my feet, I noticed a slight pulling sensation, but I thought nothing of it until I saw Ray's face change. He pointed to my butt. There was a circle of dried blood there.

"You wounded, Sam?"

Dumfounded, I lowered my trousers and looked at my hip. On the right pad of my buttocks was a four-inch gash, which, from a hasty remembrance of last night, I supposed had been made when the Jap had dived at me with the bayonet.

"I didn't even know about it," I said foolishly.

Four artillery shells whistled over and exploded ahead.

Ray smiled and unhooked the bandage packet from my rifle belt. Chuckling merrily to himself, he quickly sifted sulfa into the wound and tied the bandage around my crotch.

He peered up at me. "Great weapon, the bayonet, huh?"

"Absolutely," I managed to say.

"Well—you're cured. Purple Heart, first night out, and didn't know about it." He gave me a hearty slap on the shoulder. "Sergeant Gifford," he said expansively, "you're a good boy."

I grinned, pleased.

We walked around the west rim of the perimeter. Webster was erect, but he seemed determined to stay in his hole.

"How's it going, Web?" I said.

"If you still think I'm a coward," he said, a pathetic whine in his voice, "just jump down here with me and we'll find out."

"Aw, Web—"

"Look, Web," Ray interrupted, "if Sam hadn't done you that way, you'd be out there in the jungle by yourself, so get off that stuff."

Without batting an eye, Webster said, "You heard what I said to Gifford. The same goes for you too—Sir."

Kenny walked up behind us. "Cut it out, Web," he said quietly. "Just cut it out."

Webster abruptly sat down in his foxhole and turned his head away.

"Ray!" It was Raker.

We hurried across the perimeter and found Raker peering into his foxhole, wide-eyed with fear. It was Bryant, slumped over the edge of the foxhole. He was dead.

"Lord," Raker said shakily. "I didn't know he was dead." Then: "I was telling'im this morning that he'd sure been quiet enough." And, after a pause, he added: "I never thought much about him not answering me."

I didn't feel so strongly about this death. Fromage, yesterday, had numbed me, I suppose, and I was still concerned with Webster. And also, Bryant was one of the replacements who had joined us when we left Texas.

Meleski, who had so defiantly shouted at the Japs last night, discovered—and yelled—that the hole next to him had been untended throughout the night, for the two men in it were both dead.

"Jeez," Meleski said solemnly, "no wonder that Jap almost got me in the back last night."

We counted the Jap dead. There were 14 of them,

stocky, bandy-legged little men with oddly shaped helmets and long, old-fashioned-looking rifles. They lay stiff and impersonal, like dead animals, in various poses of violence. I found the Jap officer where he had tumbled down the slope after Kenny and I had fired into his face. One of our bullets had entered through the bridge of his nose, the other through his upper lip. I hated him with a rich personal hatred that took no consideration of his being dead. In his pockets I found two maps, a compass and lewd pictures. I handed the bundle to Ray without comment. I gave the saber to Kenny, who had been eyeing it covetously.

We ate our breakfast—K-ration. I put four men on a detail to bury our dead and Ray marked the graves on the map so the Graves Registration Teams would have no trouble finding them. I put Meleski in charge of burying the Jap bodies.

"All right now," Meleski called, mimicking our accent, "Ah'm a-needin' fo' rot good men to hep me bury them theah Jayips."

"Hmmm," Raker drawled. "If ole Meleski keeps that up, he'll learn to speak real English some of these days."

"Come on, you Rebels!"

Carr, Raker and I pitched in to help him. We dragged the corpses into the jungle and dropped them.

We were listening to Meleski conduct a short funeral oration over the Jap corpses, when we heard a column of men approaching. We ran.

"Japs!" Raker yelled, as we scrambled up the knoll.

There was a flurry of hustling bodies and abruptly all was quiet. We waited, rifles ready to pick out the first target that showed itself.

"Little Rock," came the call from the jungle.

There was an audible sigh of relief from our perimeter.

"Pine Bluff," Ray answered.

It was Able Company, sent forward to relieve us because the Colonel wanted to use us for reconnaissance—"For a change," Carr grumbled.

As we filed into the jungle, headed for the beach, I heard the Able CO hurrying his men into position and I smiled at his fear, probably equal to that of ours last night. I felt like an old, scarred veteran of many a bloody campaign.

From far to the left I heard the sullen rumble of artillery. 155-mm stuff, I reckoned, and a flight of four P-38's roared over our heads, so low that the trees swayed with their prop wash. After a moment, I heard the ragged cackle of their strafing 50-caliber machine guns. Without warning sign of any kind, it began to rain. It rained so hard that I could barely see the high, square shoulders of Ray Mosby, who stalked through the heavy growth as if it were a cool, sunny day.

Kenny said somberly, "Hope them boys in the P-38's don't get fouled up by this rain."

13

The Japs in the caves held out 14 days, during which the men with the flame throwers went about the business of extermination with horrible precision and the island became a pyre of bloated, roasted flesh. The corpses were found in a variety of grotesque poses, arms over their faces, wide, seared grins that exposed their long, narrow teeth. A high-ranking general, in answer to protests from American humanitarians, said it was better to use the flame throwers than to lose the lives of American boys. The general was probably right, for entering the caves without the terrible weapons would have been impossible.

On the day the island was cleared and the caves no longer concealed effective fighting Japs, we grouped on the beach to wait for the landing craft to take us back to the ships. I saw the bombers coming, high, from the north, and it occurred to me, as I lounged in the shade of a splintered palm log, that they looked like no bombers of ours, but I had come to depend upon the Navy as an almost airtight protective screen. It was a high, bright day and only a few moments before a flight of P-38's had rocketed out in the same general direction from which the bombers came. They were Bettys.

"JAP PLANES!" somebody shouted hoarsely when the planes, at five thousand feet, were almost directly over us.

I crawled under a big log and Kenny Carr piled on top of me. The first bomb hit before many of the men even noticed the planes.

The bombs were dropped in sticks on the vast pattern of men and war equipment spread out on the beach. It was over in 15 seconds. If most of the bombs hadn't been duds, the Regiment would have been erased as an effective fighting unit. There were four Bettys and they each dropped 12 bombs. Only nine of them exploded, four of them in the water, three of them in the jungle. The two which exploded in the regimental area killed most of the men in George Company and almost half of those in Able Company. The explosions were loud; rips of thunder that were so huge that my ears seemed unable to deal with their magnitude.

The duds plunked into the sand and disappeared, leaving small holes, into which oozed the hot, dry sand. One of them struck about a foot from my left shoulder and my arm fell into the hole it left. I lay perfectly still for perhaps a full minute before I became aware of Kenny's weight on my back.

"You hurt, Kenny?"

He rolled off me. "I'm all right," he said weakly.

I crawled from under the log and looked at Kenny. His own expression mirrored mine: we were both surprised that we were still alive. My hands began to tremble and I raked them over my face.

"Recon!" Ray called. *"On the line with the stretchers!"*

I took a deep breath and stood erect, trying to remember where Doc Wingate had established the aid station. I saw him busily directing his men into action. I gathered the platoon around me and hurried them to Doc.

George Company, which had received the Presidential Unit Citation for its work early in the campaign, was gone. There were three men, two privates and a second lieutenant, alive and unwounded. There were seven men whose wounds would heal. The remainder were dead, their bones and flesh thrown over a wide area. It was not until a year later when I was court-martialed and sent to George Company, that I realized one of the surviving privates was Willie Crawford.

Able Company lost 28 dead and 14 wounded. Headquarters Company had one casualty: an intelligence clerk was sliced neatly in two by one of the duds. He died instantly, without crying.

By midafternoon we had moved the wounded to the hospital ship in the lagoon and had buried the dead. Recon, the last platoon aboard the ships, was being drawn over the rail when the P-38's returned from chasing the Bettys. They had managed to shoot down one of the bombers. The convoy steamed away.

Looking over the fantail at the ugly camel-backed mountain, I realized that the huge gashes in the jungle would heal within a matter of days and nothing would remain except nightmares to arouse memories of violent explosion and fire. The island—already so far away that the scars were beginning to fade—was the end of the first episode, which makes the most indelible mark.

14

We were transported to a small island to the south which had been recently vacated by an infantry division now headed north to begin the invasion of another island. We noted, with great satisfaction, that one of the regiments had

left its tents standing and we didn't have to suffer the exhaustion of making a decent place to live. Even the kitchens were left and the cooks served a hot meal, our first in almost a month, an hour after we landed. That night we were issued the beer which had accumulated during the campaign, twenty-one cans to the man. I got sluggishly drunk and awoke the next morning with a heavy head.

During the following two weeks, we stood reveille at nine o'clock, went through an hour of exercises, and were through for the day. Raker, Carr, Meleski and I played bridge all afternoon, every day. Jack Gifford told me that he had never seen such a religious crowd of men in all his preaching experience.

Colonel Cozzens strolled about the camp with a lazy, benign air, stopping often to pass the time of day with the men, most of whom he knew by first name. Rested and relaxed now, the Colonel looked almost as well as he had back in Gray's Landing.

"Let's see now, Billy," he would muse and clear his throat, "you're Guy Chesterson's boy, aren't you?"

"Nosir, Guy's my uncle. I'm Elmer's boy."

"Oh, *Elmer!* Why, I know Elmer almost as well as I know Guy. Fact is, Elmer and I were sort of partners once."

"Yessir, during the Depression."

The Colonel's face reddened. "Ah—yes." He didn't like to be reminded that he and Poppa had acted as bankers in those days. "How'd you make out on the island?"

"Might' near got scared to death, Colonel."

"Same with me! Makes a man wish he's back plowing cotton, doesn't it?"

"Sure does, Colonel."

"We'll get back, some of these days." The Colonel cleared his throat. "Well, son, take care of yourself."

"You do the same, Colonel."

I couldn't help smiling. This was no 20th-century military man. It would have been more in character if he had been in command of a regiment of Confederate infantry. His judgments came hard for him in this army, for he instinctively judged men as individuals. He had probably never used the word "masses" in his life.

One day he asked me, "Been having any trouble with your men?"

I carefully looked away. "Webster."

"Uh-hmm, I've heard about that," he said. "Wasn't your fault, Sam."

"Yessir, it was too."

"I can't see why."

"If I hadn't been so scared, I'd've had enough sense to treat him right."

"Ray says you're calm as a block of ice in combat."

"I'm afraid Ray's not right."

We sat for a few minutes without talking.

"Tell you what let's do with Web, Sam," the Colonel said. "Just before we leave this place, I'll transfer him to—uh—can he type?"

"Nosir, don't think so."

"Hmmm. . . . He's too proud to be an orderly. How about trucks? Think we could make a mechanic out of him?"

"Yessir, I think so. But he's better with guns. He won the rifle matches back in Texas."

The Colonel nodded. "Good idea. Don't say anything about it. You might even act a little mad for losing a man just before an invasion."

"All right, Sir."

The Regiment was reorganized during the rest period. We had been designated as a "Task Force" during the island campaign, but the Navy had made that name popular with the press at home and the Army, having no intention of confusing itself with the Navy in the minds of the taxpayers, changed our name to "Regimental Combat Team," RCT, it was usually called. A battalion of 105-mm artillery was permanently assigned to us. Colonel Cozzens, in all likelihood a paradox to spit-and-polish brass because he had a good regiment without imposing any of the usual indignities upon his men, became heavy with brass himself, a brigadier general. However, aside from the small clique of Regular Army officers recently assigned to the Regiment, I heard nobody call him anything other than Colonel, which caused strong irritation among the Regulars.

After we were thoroughly rested, combat behavior became our prime source of conversation. Kenny admitted that he had almost bolted once during the first night on the island. Raker added to that by saying that he was already out of his hole when he happened to think that the hole was the safest place he was likely to find. I analyzed myself completely, but knew no answers. I had two reactions to fear: a vile temper fit or complete, slow-motion lucidity. My anger had caused the trouble with Webster; the lucidity has caused each fight to appear as clear as a well-photographed movie. The trembling fits after the fight was over went unexplained too.

It became my problem to help the replacements take their places in the platoon. At first they were awed by our combat experiences, but didn't dare ask questions about them. When they found out we didn't care, they nearly drove us crazy with their talk. Almost a month passed before they were assimilated, but it was their constant questioning that caused Webster's end to come prematurely.

I had steered clear of him as much as possible. The few contacts I had with him were always embarrassing. He wouldn't accept my apologies and I finally had to stop them because they were hurting me in the eyes of the replacements.

In Texas, Web had been rated an excellent soldier, especially with the rifle, and it was a surprise to us all when he failed so miserably in combat. But we were careful to avoid mentioning his failure.

One day I overheard him berating me to the replacements and paid no attention until he said:

"Hell, boys, he'd be a buck private if he hadn't married the Colonel's daughter. And that's the only reason he married her too. Why, she's loved-up everything in Gray's Landing. *I've* had her, *after* Gifford married her too. And Carr did—"

I spun him around and smashed my fist into his teeth. He staggered back, then leapt at me like a monkey, his hands clutching for my throat. At the same time he uttered a strangely animal cry. His hand closed around my Adam's apple.

Somehow we broke his hold on my throat and he fell heavily on his back. Two of us dived on him and a couple of boys, white with fear, raced out of the tent, yelling, "Lieutenant! Lieutenant Mosby!"

It was impossible to keep Webster down. He was a powerful man and rage multiplied his strength. At the moment when Ray entered, Webster saw him and shrieked a long scream of agony. He broke free of us. He stumbled to his bunk and snatched up his rifle. He pointed it directly at Ray's chest and, without a word, his lower lip drawn down until it revealed his tusks, he gathered three bandoleers of ammo and looped them about his neck. The tent was filled with the sound of his breathing. Without having spoken a word, he wheeled and bounded across the stretch of sand between the coconut grove and the jungle.

That was the last we saw of him until the day we left the island.

The Colonel was deeply moved by Webster's desertion, but he made it plain he didn't blame me, though I knew that in part it was my fault. The Colonel insisted to the contrary, but I wasn't convinced. Each day the Colonel sent a patrol, into the jungle with instructions not to fire. The patrols stopped every few yards and shouted, "Web, the Colonel says come back! You won't have to go to combat again. *Web, come back!*" But nobody found him.

We knew he was alive, for, on the third night of his absence, a noise was heard in the kitchen tent and the next morning two cases of 10-in-one rations were missing. The

next night a rifle and four entire cases of ammo were missing. Thereafter, under orders from the Colonel, a man's weekly ration was left standing unguarded in the open and there it stayed until it disappeared, to be promptly replaced again. Rifles and ammo were to be kept strapped to our bunks. On three occasions the S-4 officer reported that the warehouse tent had been raided for fatigue uniforms.

"Getting fixed up for a mighty long stay, seems like," Carr murmured.

We saw nothing more of Webster until the day we left the island. Stacked at the edge of the abandoned camp were more than a hundred cases of 10-in-ones. There was a wall tent, a couple of new ponchos, five pairs of boots, underwear, soap, sox, shoelaces and a carton of storm matches. There was also a note from the Colonel, telling Web that the Colonel would help him as much as he could if he ever got a chance to return to civilization.

We saw Web again, and for the last time, when we were boarding the landing craft that was to take us to the transports anchored offshore.

"Look!" Raker cried.

Standing in the middle of the deserted company street, his rifle at sling, his legs planted far apart, his cap in hand, was Webster.

"Web!" Ray shouted joyously. "Thatta boy! Let's go, fella! Let's go!" Ray ran a few impulsive steps toward Web.

But Web quickly trained his rifle on us and Ray halted. Web motioned for him to go back to the boat, which Ray did. Standing there, dumb with sadness, we stared at Web for a long time before he motioned us to leave.

As we pulled away from the beach, he slowly walked toward us, all the while giving us friendly waves, and he watched us until he was merely a lonely figure on the beach of a deserted island.

Web was the first of us to give up.



Book III

The Old Men

The next invasion was absurdly easy, even on the first day. We landed under a bright, friendly midday sky instead of in the gloom of dawn. There had been no resistance. We pushed ashore from the landing craft and plunged unchecked into the familiar jungle. This time the Navy had known what to do; for a week their dive bombers had pounded at the island. The bombardment had lasted three days. I saw hundreds of corpses thrown about the jungle. Able, Baker and Charlie Companies pierced the jungle and rammed three miles inland before they stopped to form the night's perimeter. The new George Company, the patched-up King Company and How Company, forming the other half of the nutcracker maneuver, covered an equal distance. Only four shots were fired during the first 24 hours of the campaign.

It seemed absurd that it was on such a quiet afternoon that Colonel Cozzens was killed.

Recon was in perimeter with King Company and Ray was talking on the radio. "This is King," he said, "repeat your last transmission."

"This is Big Red," the radio replied. *"Send the Recon platoon sergeant—Gifford—to this headquarters immediately. Over."*

My heart lurched. It was something of extreme importance when a radio operator was in such a hurry that he didn't stop to look up my code name. "What is it, Ray?"

He lowered his head and pinched nervously at the bridge of his nose. "The Colonel's been hit by a sniper."

Without even picking up my rifle, I whirled and ran into the jungle.

I heard Ray shout, "Meleski, Raker! Take Sam's rifle and follow him!"

I didn't stop until I reached the beach. Grouped around the message-center foxhole were more than 50 men. I burst through them and jumped into the hole. Major Gates grabbed me, but I jerked free of him and knelt by the Colonel. I suppose I was crying. I alternately shook him and pleaded with him to answer me.

"Ease up now, Sam," Major Gates muttered.

"Where in the hell was the guard?" I shouted into Major Gates' face. "Let me get hold of the sonofabitch. Where's the guard?"

"Now take it easy, Sam," Major Gates said soothingly. "It was nobody's fault, the Colonel said so himself. It was his time, that's all."

The enlisted men were embarrassed and were slowly leaving. Soon only a few officers and the radio operator were left.

"Where was the guard?" I asked.

A young second lieutenant, who had been observing me silently, stepped forward and spoke up. "Shall I put this man in arrest for insubordination, Major?"

Major Gates had been a gentle man all his life, but his fury was as explosive as the most violent of men. He half rose, choked with anger, and then jumped out of the foxhole. He gave the lieutenant a shove. "Get away from here, Lieutenant Baxter!" Major Gates said. "Go on!"

The young lieutenant hurried off.

I got to my feet and looked down at my father-in-law. He wasn't mutilated; his face was in repose. His eyes were closed. And, my mind starkly clear, I thought that it had been foolish for him to become a military man. A man like my father-in-law, I was thinking, couldn't expect to live. The good men always are the ones to die.

We buried the Colonel at sundown. Jack Gifford, his strong Arkansas accent strangely alien in this air, read over the grave. And while Jack talked shortly, I realized that this day had wrenched me still further away from that gentle, innocent life at Gray's Landing. Jack's words were more than a funeral oration:

". . . We bury a friend here. Julian Cozzens. Most of us knew him as a civilian, and he was that. He died a civilian, still aware of the virtue and honor of being a gentleman and hating this criminal war. He was a civilian to me and he was a civilian to all his friends. It is the shame of the twentieth century that such a man had to lose his life to the bitter, pagan gods of warfare." Jack paused to regain his voice. "I pray to God," he murmured, "that the man in this grave isn't the Regiment's last civilian."

Jack's prayer was given a negative answer the next morn-

ing. Flown in aboard a Navy PBY flying boat, Colonel Miles arrived to replace the Colonel. He was a short little man, fat-fingered and pink. His mouth was red and soft. His butt quivered with every step he took. His orderly unfolded a canvas chair and Colonel Miles eased himself into it.

"Well, gentlemen, I've spent a comfortable year in the replacement depot waiting for such an assignment as this. Let's get to work." He deliberately scratched his chin with his left hand so everybody could see his Academy ring.

As we walked away, Ray Mosby muttered, "Not very smart of him, admitting he's waited a year for a regiment. Most colonels're sent overseas with their outfits."

2

THE NEXT MORNING, after the Regiment had spent an uneasy but quiet night, the fiasco began.

Able, Baker and Charlie Companies on the left, and George, How and King Companies on the right jaws of the nutcracker were preparing to begin the slow closing motion that would trap the Japs between them. It was perfectly planned, a little gem of strategy, the first such maneuver executed in the Pacific because this was the first time space had been found to do it. In the center of the jaws was a high ridge and there the Japs would be, holed up in their inevitable caves, and the fierce charges on our perimeters would never happen. The Japs were purely on the defensive from the day of the landing.

But before dawn had become daylight, it happened.

Colonel Miles, for reasons that must have been his own, for Major Gates advised strongly against it, ordered Able Company to break off and retreat to an area which had been covered yesterday. Miles offered only one explanation to Major Gates: "I've a hunch that we'll find the enemy—right—there!" He directed his swagger stick to a spot which had been, yesterday, deserted.

"Colonel Miles," the Major said, "we covered that sector yesterday."

"Major, I'm a peculiar duck, you might say. I have hunches, and nine times out of ten, those hunches have proved correct, if twenty-seven years in the army will back me up. And I have a hunch that you let the enemy slip through your fingers yesterday. The enemy is quite clever at infiltration."

"So we hear," Major Gates said wryly.

Colonel Miles tapped the map with his swagger stick. "The enemy is—*right—there!*" He turned and gave the Major a glassy look. "You're not disagreeing with me, are you, Major?"

So Able Company broke off and retraced its steps—and found nothing. It spent the day crashing through the jungle, looking for Japs like a bunch of kids on an Easter-egg hunt. The men were exhausted and their officers had no explanation to offer.

But Colonel Miles' hunch did finally prove correct. During the day the Japs sneaked through the hole left by Able's breaking off maneuver and that night, as Able occupied a lonely perimeter, four miles from the nearest company, the Japs attacked it in strength. Colonel Miles, who had called in Dog Company to strengthen his own company perimeter, could contemplate the situation in complete safety. He was tremendously satisfied.

"Well, Major, wasn't my hunch correct?"

"Yessir, they're there, but you gave them the entire day to make the journey." Major Gates was relieved a few minutes later.

I listened to the firing all night and as midnight came and passed, it was obvious that most of the firing was coming from Jap rifles. At two o'clock, Able radioed that it was down to half strength and it was then that Colonel Miles made a mistake that no regimental commander had made before him and none afterward.

Colonel Miles ordered Easy Company out of reserve and dispatched it to the rescue of Able Company.

All the staff officers protested that Colonel Cozzens' policy had been to keep a strict perimeter at night.

"Quite right," Miles answered. "But I'm happy to report that I'm not the late *General* Cozzens."

Easy Company moved forward without incident until it passed within 50 yards of Baker's perimeter, which, thinking it was under attack from the Japs, opened fire with machine guns and mortars. Easy Company lost 14 men before the firing could be stopped.

After that, the whole thing fell apart. The trails, dim enough during the daylight hours, were impossible to follow after dark. Somehow Easy's first platoon took the right fork in the trail and the second platoon took the left fork, but floundered into the jungle a hundred yards later. The third platoon missed the fork altogether and stumbled on, trying to follow a compass bearing through the dark tangle of undergrowth. Only the first platoon, because it reached the far side of the island and followed its ears toward the sound of the firing, reached Able Company at dawn, in time to help the 16 survivors, counting seven walking wounded, bury the dead.

During the following day, the Japs launched the first daylight attack we had ever seen. They charged out of the jungle and flowed into Baker Company's exposed flank and, before Baker could get itself into a position for defense, it lost 21 dead and 29 wounded. The Japs also found the two lost platoons of Easy and, of the 72 men in the two platoons, 33 returned.

Colonel Miles, of course, had an excuse: "Nine times out of ten, my hunches are correct." And here he made a gesture that signified that he had written off the losses. "That must have been the tenth hunch."

As sundown approached, Colonel Miles began to look worried. Immediately around his foxhole, he ordered Recon to dig a ring of holes. Around us, the remainder of Headquarters Company. And around Headquarters, Fox and How Companies. He had built a three-ring perimeter and he was snugly in the middle of it. He gave no orders at all to the companies which remained in the jungle. They sat. And that night the Japs attacked each perimeter—and each company reported that the attacks were of battalion strength.

The attack on the Headquarters perimeter was the only one that failed. Our tremendous firepower cut the Japs down before they could penetrate even the first ring. But the other companies weren't so lucky; they were already weakened by the vicious daylight attacks. Nobody was ever certain how many casualties the Regiment took that night, for Colonel Miles didn't let it be known.

The Regiment spent the next day fighting off a few isolated attacks, but they were weak and sporadic. The Japs, weakened by the attacks themselves, were saving their strength for the night. Colonel Miles, under persistent heckling from Major Gates, Ray Mosby and the rest of the staff, finally gave orders for the companies to come out of the jungle. Two huge perimeters were formed on the beach and that was how the Regiment survived.

The next morning a Major General was brought to the island by PBY and for four hours he and Colonel Miles sat in a tent and talked. The guard, before he was ordered out of earshot by Lieutenant Baxter, the one Major Gates had shoved the night of Colonel Cozzens' death, reported that he heard the Major General say, "My *God,* Colonel, does it make any *difference* what Grant did to Lee at Fredericksburg? Those boys in that jungle were *Americans* and they're dead!"

"General," Miles was heard to say firmly, "I'm a man of hunches and nine times out of ten they're—"

"Hunches in a pig's tail! You're the stupidest—" And the guard was permitted to hear no more.

The Major General left at noon. Colonel Miles sat in his tent for the remainder of the afternoon, unseen by anybody. At dusk he emerged, cocky and fat, to order his tent struck and the perimeter closed for the night. And we took more attacks.

The Japs were unable to break our big perimeters, but we took casualties. During the height of the attack an American grenade exploded in Miles' foxhole. I know it was one of our grenades because it left a spark trail as it arched up from one of the Fox Company foxholes. Miles was shaken but unhurt because, huddled behind Major Gates, none of the fragments could reach him. Major Gates, who had been relieved, but remained as adjutant until a replacement could be found, died the next day at noon.

The next afternoon a regiment from a famous Army division relieved us. We boarded transports and were taken to a rest camp in New Guinea.

3

THE FULL IMPACT of the Colonel's death didn't hit me until a few days after I landed in New Guinea. And yet, the loss remained vague and misty. It was a severance with a part of my past, but I couldn't make myself articulate enough to spell it out in words. After his death my memories of Gray's Landing existed in the sweet mist of a strange nostalgia. It made me ache longingly for my innocent past and at the same time, fear for my future.

The loss of the Colonel took symbol in the map the Intelligence section had drawn showing the location of his grave. Lieutenant Baxter found out about it and demanded that I hand it over to him, so "it can be given to the proper authorities; there's no place for sentiment in the Army." I stalled him for two days until the Intelligence section could draw another one. Baxter accepted the map with undisguised glee.

I tried to explain to Jenny how her father had died and the strange effect the death had had on me, but it was no good. I destroyed the letter. I wrote several letters, but I finally had to settle by repeating, as best I could, the words Jack Gifford had spoken over the grave. And I added:

". . . I know that you and your mother aren't likely to agree with me, but I think the Colonel's body should be left in the grave. He's buried only a few feet from where he died and every Guardsman in the Regiment has left a rock or some sort of memento on the grave. . . ."

I dropped the letter into Ray's mailbox so he could censor it. I noticed that, in the box, there were several letters, almost all of which were addressed to either Jenny or Mrs. Cozzens.

We drilled. Close-order drill. The sun was so hot that many men, still exhausted from the ordeal of the last campaign, fell under it. And Colonel Miles, swagger stick in hand, watched the non-coms closely. He called us together:

"I don't know who trained you men for non-commissioned duties, but you're a failure. Didn't anybody ever bother to tell you that drilling is a serious business? You must *shout!* *Shout* your commands! *Shout* orders! *Shout!* You understand? The only thing a private understands is a loud voice!"

I drilled Recon all morning and during the afternoon I worked them like a chain gang until the camp looked like a permanent Stateside installation. We fell into our bunks at night, exhausted and insane with anger.

Around Colonel Miles' tent a stone wall was built, four feet high, by sweating, cussing men from Service Company. White paint was found for the stones. Bordering the company streets were hunks of coral and each tent sergeant was instructed to have his men plant some sort of jungle flower at each side of the tent entrance. The flowers, taken from their natural habitat by rough hands, soon wilted and died. The new Colonel stated that he had made his men plant flowers on almost every army post in the U.S.A. and Hawaii, a practice he could see no reason for discontinuing.

Colonel Miles put out a special order that officers were no longer to refer to enlisted men as gentlemen during the training lectures. "The U.S. Army," the order read, "allows the existence of gentlemen only in its commissioned ranks."

Colonel Miles lectured the Regiment:

"All right now," he began, "this isn't a civilian outfit any longer. I understand that many of you have called your officers by their first names. I have instructed the officers of this command in that little matter, and it is my desire that no enlisted man is to call any commissioned officer by his first name. Understood?

"Now, something else. It has been the practice in this command for everybody to refer to the late General Cozzens as 'the Colonel.' He was not a Colonel; he was a Brigadier General in the United States Army and it is my desire that he be referred to as such. However, I see no need of talking about him. He's dead and no talk will bring him to life. Understood?

"Now, something else. The matter of uniforms. In the future, it is my desire that you wear khaki, cotton, sun tans. This is the Army—*now*—and you're going to dress like soldiers. Understood?

"Now, something else. The matter of this command's designation. This is not, repeat *not*, a National Guard regiment. It is my desire that you call it a Regimental Combat Team, exactly what it is. It was at one time a National Guard regiment, but it is no longer a National Guard regiment. Under—"

"You damn right it ain't, Miles!" arose a shout from one of the line companies.

"What? What's—"

The voice roared out: *"It ain't no National Guard outfit no more because you killed all they was left, you murdering old sonofabitch!"*

Miles purpled and choked—and dropped his swagger stick. "Arrest that man!" he finally shouted. "Arrest that man! Put him in arrest! Every man here's a witness! You heard what he said to me! Every man here's a witness! Put him in arrest! Put that man in arrest!"

While Miles ranted, the man was dragged, kicking and clawing, through the crowd of seated enlisted men. Four officers were holding him. I had never seen the officers before, although I later knew them as the first of many Regular Army officers Miles was to get into the Regiment.

The commander of an RCT was supposed to hold the rank of Brigadier General, but a week later Miles' hopes of becoming a general officer were obliterated. Brigadier General Carl S. Hix was given command of the RCT and Miles was left to command the Regiment. He had been in command no more than six hours when the telephone operators had overheard enough to tell us that he was in charge of all tactical situations and Miles was to be nothing more than an administrator. Miles retreated to his tent, where he stayed four days, coming out only when Hix called for him.

General Hix was a big man, dark and scar-faced. He looked like, and was, a slightly aged All-American. He charged about the camp, greeting our salutes with a casual gesture and a "How's it going, son?"

But we couldn't completely trust somebody who would tolerate Miles. Hix was going to have to do some tall soldiering to convince us.

He discontinued the drills, issued our overdue beer and put us back in fatigue uniforms, but Miles was ever present with his "little talks."

"The only thing we can do," Ray told me, speaking of the treatment Miles was handing out to the National Guard officers, "is stay away from him as much as we can. When we get around him, he gives us a lecture on how 'real officers' act. And for an officer that's never seen combat, he sure's to hell sets himself up as an expert on it. I'd hate like hell to be on a patrol he would lead."

The man who had called Miles a murderous old sonofabitch was court-martialed. But instead of being sent to the stockade, he was kept in the Regiment. He was transferred to George Company, which seemed a ridiculous punishment, for the man had been in King Company, which had received its share of the bloody fights. However, a few days later, Lieutenant Baxter caught one of the regimental clerks breaking a regulation and the court-martial sent the man to George Company. Thereafter, the pattern was clear: men were sent to George for a multitude of sins, some bad, some petty, some, apparently, for no reason at all; some were sent for rape (laying with the New Guinea women, by consent or purchase, was rape), brawling uniform carelessness, dusty rifle, lack of personal sanitation and insubordination (calling officers by first names).

And so, until the invasion of Leyte, the Regiment did nothing. We rotted in New Guinea. We were weakened by malaria, jungle rot, dengue fever, jaundice, and elephantiasis. But mostly we were weakened by the courts-martial, which had become an almost daily occurrence. It finally got so bad that General Hix called Miles (with a telephone operator listening) and put a stop to it.

"Get this straight, Miles. You're not commanding a foul-up company. This is a regiment, and not every man in it is a foul-up. This is a wartime regiment and these men are here to fight, not run through close-order drill—which reminds me: stop screwing up that training schedule I send over to you. You might also remember that every man in the country can't and doesn't want to be a soldier. . . ."

The courts-martial leveled off. Recon lost four good men to George and they were replaced by men from the replacement depots. The replacements came in with stories about a certain colonel, commanding a replacement depot, whose punishments were so cruel and unusual that several attempts had been made to kill him.

"It seems like a hundred years ago," Ray Mosby said, "but I can remember when we had the best regiment in the Pacific."

4

I TOOK REFUGE in thinking of Jenny. She continued to send bundles of pictures, but I asked for more. I couldn't get enough.

Finally came the invasion of Leyte. But we weren't a spearheading regiment. We were nothing more than security troops.

Ray and I had Recon on outpost and we talked during a drenching downpour:

"Ray?"

Although we were 10 miles from regimental headquarters, he automatically glanced around to make sure nobody had heard me call him by his first name. "Yeah?"

I wiped rain out of my eyes. "Wonder what it's like to be a civilian."

He gave me a searching look. "You're not thinking about giving up, are you, Sam?"

I shrugged in the rain. "I'm getting pretty tired of what we're taking."

"I'm going to outlast this war, no matter what I have to do, short of getting myself killed."

Ray was the next one to give up.

It happened on a routine patrol. Ray was leading us and I followed him. We were alert but relaxed, glad to be away from regimental headquarters. Ray was the first to hear the scream. I halted the column and waited for his instructions. He crept forward and I advanced a few feet so I could keep him in sight. He was no more than 30 yards away. Suddenly the scream came again and this time it was obvious that it was a woman, or a girl. Ray stiffened and brushed a palmetto aside. Then, roaring like a lunatic, he plowed through the jungle. I quickly signaled Carr to bring the men and rushed forward to see what had happened to Ray. I found him standing over three huddled bodies, two Japs and a tiny Filipino girl. Ray was chopping at the Japs, axe-fashion with his rifle. He was talking insanely to himself. The girl was motionless. There was no need of my making sure the Japs were dead. Ray had beaten their heads to a pulp with the butt of his rifle.

I jerked him away. He glared at me, white-faced and blue-lipped, before he groaned and collapsed. I left him on the ground while I examined the girl. She was about six years old and the Japs had raped her.

We were on the way back to Regimental with Ray when the fit hit me. Before this, I had been able to control the trembling that came after the fight, but I couldn't now. I could walk, but Raker had to help me. I knew that I was going to be the one who followed Ray.

He didn't speak during the return trip. He stumbled along, a man holding each arm, and when we sat him in a chair at the aid station, he stared stonily into the wall of the tent. Doc Wingate gave him a shot in the arm, which put him to sleep.

But Ray wasn't sent home. That wasn't Miles' policy. Officers were given assignments that weren't such a drain on their morale. Doc Wingate argued and pleaded with Miles, but Ray stayed. He was promoted to captain and became commanding officer of Headquarters Company.

Only during those times when it was absolutely safe did Ray emerge from his foxhole. He kept a demolition grenade handy and he swore that he was going to blow himself up if the Japs got too close to him. Once, when he had to leave the hole to go to the latrine, I sneaked in, found the grenade and removed the fuse from it.

It was soon after that I began to feel myself slipping. I began to have nightmares and my trembling fits were more violent each time it happened. I was still as good in combat as I had ever been, for when we were fighting I operated with the same, seemingly slow-motioned precision. I became obsessed, however, with the thought that maybe this slow-motion idea was false: it could be true, I thought, that the Japs are actually that slow. A really fast-moving Jap, I thought, will some day run a bayonet through my belly.

So I was falling apart. It was now a matter of which could last longer, the war or Sam Gifford. The answer soon came: Lieutenant Baxter took Ray's place as CO of Recon.

"Now let's get a few things straight, Gifford," he told me. "You used to run this platoon the way you wanted to. You can make up your mind that *I'm* running it from now. Mosby might have been satisfied by telling you to take a look at so-and-so and take your word for it. But I'm not Mosby. You'll bring back proof to me or I'll call you a liar. Understood?"

"Yes," I said patiently. "I understand, sir."

And I led patrols. For a man who had chosen the Army as a career, Baxter was mighty leery of fighting. Contrary to what he had told me, he did take my word on reports, for he stayed away from the dangerous patrols. But Miles didn't know about that. Baxter used "I" when he turned in my reports; Baxter even got a Bronze Star for a patrol he never made.

The trembling fits were taking their toll. I went to Baxter, armed with the proper Army regulation, and told him I wanted to turn in my stripes.

Baxter was dumfounded. He had never heard of this. Soldiers, by tradition, covet those stripes and won't give them up easily.

"What—what for?" he said.

"I'm worn out, sir," I said. I felt I needed to cry.

"Sergeant, the answer is unalterably no! You've got experience that I can use and I'm going to use it. Understood?"

"I'm trying to tell you, sir, I'm worn out. I'm asking to give up before I ruin myself."

"Give up?" he shouted. *"Give up!"* He got hold of himself. "Sergeant Gifford, we're in a war, in case you didn't know it. And something else, when you give up—as you *civilians* insist on putting it—cowardice is a better name—when you give up, you'll go directly to George Company. Understood?"

"Sir, there're fresh men in the platoon who could do a better job of—"

"Shut up, sergeant. Do you hear? Shut up!"

So I continued to make the patrols, although I was never any good as a leader on the return trips. Kenny Carr always brought us back.

"Remember how scared you got when you'd almost have a car wreck?" Doc Wingate explained. "Well, your trembling fits are an exaggeration of the same thing. But be careful. You can no more keep this up than you could continue surviving a near wreck every day. If this damn Army weren't so riddon by pseudo virtue and puritanism. you could take a good jolt of whiskey after each patrol and you'd do better. Aw, hell—this Army. . . ."

5

The Luzon Campaign was easy fighting. Other, better outfits were making the bitter pushes and we moved in behind them to guard against infiltration and snipers. Our contacts with Jap patrols never lasted more than three or four minutes, but each little fight left me with a minutely more-violent fit of trembling. I developed a tic in the muscle of my right cheek, immediately under my eye. A crusty rash broke out on the backs of both hands. The same rash covered my crotch. My feet were both infected with fungus.

During the actual fights, I still fought well enough, but I was haunted more than ever by the fear that a Jap was going to move faster than I anticipated. . . . I stayed in my foxhole and wrote long, often clever letters to Jenny. The act of writing became a ritual and the contents of my writing kit, the paper, the pen, became objects of very jealous affection. I kept the kit at the bottom of my jungle pack and anybody who tried to borrow it was met with cold rejection. I heard Raker, Carr and Meleski talking about me:

"Sam's pretty far gone," Raker said.

"Those fits of his," Meleski said, "give me the creeps."

"All right then, damn it," Carr said, "don't watch'em."

"Funny thing," Raker said. "Ray, then Sam. You think them Oak Street boys ain't got what it takes?"

"Nuts!" Carr said. "They're as tough as anybody else." He paused. "It's just that they've had it easier than we have. Sort of like not getting enough basic training."

The battle lines tightened and locked; the campaign was stale. Manila was free and in that blasted city American soldiers were whoring and brawling. Miles had no pass system, but the mail truck needed guards and those of us who were lucky were put on that detail.

Raker, Carr, Meleski and I were four of the lucky ones. We went into Manila like four country boys going to town on a Saturday. At one of the Red Cross canteens, we saw the first American women we had seen in almost three years. Carr and Meleski went off with some obliging Filipino girls. Raker and I found some whiskey. I awoke the next morning, big-headed and sick, and discovered that I still had my wallet, but it had been riffed. The four of us met at the post office and bummed a breakfast from a quartermaster company nearby. I was glad to see the truck, loaded with mail, ready to take us back to the Regiment.

"Think you'll make it through the war, Sam?" Carr asked.

"They say it'll last till Forty-eight," I said. "I can't last that long."

"Back in Forty-one, Sam, what'd you think'd happen to you?"

"I thought I'd be a respectable married man by now, kids, stuff like that. How about you?"

"Back in Forty-one," Carr said, "I never thought me and you'd be making the town together."

I grinned. "We're doing it though, aren't we?"

A few days later the first rotation plan was announced. I had more than enough points, but Baxter listed all his noncoms as "essential to the war effort," and I stayed. Baxter became the object of an emotion the intensity of which dominated much of my thinking: I hated him, the first person I had ever hated.

I took no pains to hide it from him. When it was necessary for me to talk to him, I looked him squarely in the eye and let my hatred flicker as brightly as it would. It made him squirm and it wasn't long before he developed the habit of finding something for his eyes to do when I faced him. If he hadn't been aware that reduction in rank was what I craved, he would have broken me to private immediately.

During the final weeks of the campaign, with the fighting at an almost complete standstill, Miles decided it would be safe enough to move his headquarters nearer to the front. He chose a small town in Central Luzon; the choice was made after Recon examined several towns and found one where Miles could be comfortable. Squarely in the middle of the town was a huge brick house, around which were several smaller buildings that could house the various platoons and sections of Headquarters Company.

As we approached the town, Miles stopped the column. *"Baxtah!"* he shouted.

"Let's go, Sergeant!" Baxter said immediately and jumped out of the jeep. He trotted back toward Miles' command car. I followed at a walk.

"I have a hunch," Miles said, "that there might be a few of the enemy left behind to harass us. Baxter, send some men forward."

"On your way, Sergeant!" Baxter said crisply.

I took four of the newer men with me; no need to bother the experienced hands with trivialities. There were a few civilians picking at the ruins in the south section of the town, but nothing else. When I reported back to Miles, I led the men down the middle of the road, our rifles at sling. Baxter, waiting for me, took my report and told Miles that he had found nothing. I followed Baxter to the command car and stood behind him.

But then one of the sagging walls in the south ruins chose that moment to fall. Miles blanched white and stopped the column.

"Get that Recon sergeant up here!" he shouted angrily.

Lieutenant Baxter became a whirlwind of military ambition and started running down the slope, yelling my name. He had forgotten that I had been standing behind him.

"Right here, Lieutenant," I called dryly after him.

The lieutenant, as he made his way back up the slope, was burning red with embarrassment.

"Sergeant," Miles bawled at me, "didn't your report state the enemy had withdrawn?"

"That's right, sir."

"Then how do you explain that falling wall?"

"It was weak, sir, ready to fall."

"Damn it, I know it fell!" He studied the town through his binoculars. "I have a hunch," he said, "there's still enemy troops in there."

"I think you're right, Colonel," Baxter chirped promptly.

"I don't think so, sir," I said.

"Your opinion wasn't asked for," Baxter said.

The Colonel, who held his binoculars with a high-elbow grip as movie heroes do, said, "Baxtah!"

"Yes, *sir!*"

"Two men in there to make sure. Cover them with the machine gun on your jeep. I have a hunch that we'll find a little something."

"Yes, *sir!*" Baxter hurried down the hill to his jeep. I followed patiently behind. By the time I had reached him, he had dispatched Raker, Meleski, Ralston and Saunders,

double the number Miles had wanted, toward the town. The lieutenant then crawled into his jeep and made much show of pulling back the bolt on the machine gun. "You men stand clear there," he said pompously. "I'll need a clear lane of fire."

Oh, certainly, I thought.

The men, sullen with disgust, scrambled slowly to their feet and stood with me behind the jeep. The four-man detail, Raker in charge, strolled casually down the road and I could see Meleski talking; I could tell that he was making his usual caustic remarks. Baxter knew it too and his mouth tightened. No doubt Meleski would be Sergeant of the Guard tonight.

With Raker in the lead, they disappeared into the ruins. None of the four men had unslung his rifle. Behind me, the binoculars held dramatically at his eyes, Miles watched. Baxter was breathing tensely. The rest of us were relaxed, bored.

A wall, which stood at the end of the street that we were looking down, suddenly collapsed with a crumpling roar and Baxter, his tense finger on the trigger, let loose a burst of fire. The tracers disappeared into the cloud of dust the falling wall had stirred up. The men in the Recon platoon winked and grinned at each other. I remained bored; if the fool kid wanted to waste ammunition to show off for Miles, I didn't care.

Raker, Meleski, Saunders and Ralston, running to escape the rolling bricks from the falling masonry, ran directly into Baxter's lane of fire. The lieutenant stiffened and turned white—and froze on the trigger.

The four men, looking over their shoulders at the falling wall, failed to hear the machine gun firing. Raker and Meleski fell first. Ralston and Saunders turned in time to see the tracers coming at them, but they were running too fast to stop or fall. Both of them were shot through the head.

The scene became like the one the night I had fired into the Jap officer's face. It was very plain and slow and bright. I moved with the same calm slowness, grasped my rifle by the muzzle and methodically chopped at Baxter's head with the butt. I hit him twice before he let go of the trigger and fell off the back of the jeep. He tried to roll away from me, but I followed him relentlessly.

"I'm going to kill this son of a bitch," I said plainly. I beat at him with the rifle until he was still, then I put the butt against my shoulder and, slowly, punched at the safety with the back of my trigger finger. I had my eye to the sight, making sure I didn't miss, when I saw Kenny's huge, gnarled fist coming toward my forehead. Baxter's face tilted out of sight and I struck the ground heavily on my back.

6

The court-martial found me guilty. But, possibly with the warning of General Hix in mind, nothing was said of the death penalty the prosecution had asked for. I was called to attention before the court.

"Technical Sergeant Samuel F. Gifford, 19099225, you are found guilty of striking an officer under circumstances of combat. By the authority of the Commanding General of the Regimental Combat Team, you are sentenced to ten years of hard labor at the federal detention facility at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, United States of America." He cleared his throat. "Further, you are reduced to the rank of private, and, upon the completion of your sentence, you will be dishonorably discharged from the United States Army. You will forfeit all privileges commonly due to the honorably discharged soldier.

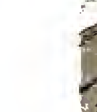
"The findings of this court are subject to the review of the Regimental Commander. If the court's sentence is approved, it will be subject to review by the Commanding General of this Regimental Combat Team. If, however, the Regimental Commander sees fit to commute the sentence, no further review by higher authority is necessary."

I was escorted to the guard tent. My head was clear and I was unafraid. Ray sat on my bunk with me for a few minutes.

"I wouldn't worry about that ten years and dishonorable discharge business, Sam," Ray said. "Miles wouldn't dare send you to the stockade because that would mean Hix would review the court-martial. He'd find a few things Miles doesn't want him to know. Worst you'll get'll be George." He smiled. "Bad enough, huh?" He rubbed his pale face with trembling hands.

Book IV

The Seasonal Eternity





Savage stood guard while Johnson, Willie Crawford, Sellers, Morgan and I bathed in the river. The water was clear and cool, a healing balm to me. I found a shallow place and sat on the pebbled bottom, letting the water tumble over me.

Willie and Sellers were trying to catch Lieutenant Johnson, who was fighting them with fists of gravel and splashes of water. They were going to duck him because he was an officer and all officers should drown.

"Stand away, you enlisted pigs!" Johnson said grandly. "You should be honored that an officer will even bathe in the same river with you."

KA-WOOONG!

Savage, our guard, had fired directly over our heads. I hustled out of the water, grabbed my clothes and dashed for the small protection of the bush the others had hidden behind. I turned to see what was going to happen.

"What's going on, Savage?" Johnson asked.

"Four Japs was getting ready to pot you guys from the other bank."

"All right, get your clothes on, boys." As we dressed, Johnson continued: "That's the second patrol they've sent this far down. But that's the first daylight job I've seen since Bailey got killed."

"I saw one yesterday," I said.

"Not this far down," Johnson said. "They must be planning to bust out or something. God knows, they wouldn't have any trouble doing that. We could hold this line just about like we could stop the river from running."

Grimes, when we returned to perimeter, was standing in

his foxhole under the house. We had no sooner appeared than the great belching voice summoned Johnson. I dropped to the edge of my foxhole and tried to control my trembling.

"Damn, Gifford," Sellers said, astounded. "What's wrong? They never fired a shot at us."

"Leave'im alone, Sellers," Willie said sharply. "He gets shaky after it's all over."

Sellers and Savage regarded me curiously for a moment before both nodded understandingly.

It had been the patrol that had done it. The rest Doc Wingate had managed for me had been enough to last out the patrol, but the trembling had returned enough to make me sick with it.

There's one way to tell when I'm really done, I thought for the hundredth time, and that's when I stop waiting till it's over to start trembling. A really fast Jap . . .

"Second platoon!" Johnson called. "Full field pack. C-rations for a week, three hundred rounds, poncho, blanket, extra sox; march order in ten minutes!"

"Hot damn!" Willie exclaimed gleefully, but not so loud as to be heard by Captain Grimes. "Outpost!"

"Best thing I've heard in a month!" Sellers said.

Savage and Morgan were both solemnly pleased.

The line of outposts began four miles from Grimes' company headquarters perimeter and that was a distance which pleased us. He was too much of a coward to come up to the outposts. And outpost duty was doubly desirable because, aside from the patrol clashes of the last few days, there had been so little action.

We hustled enthusiastically about the perimeter gathering the supplies Johnson had called for. I too had caught the feverish desire to get away from Grimes.

We gathered around the house, ready to leave, and stood in the shade of the lister bag while Grimes surveyed us with that grin of his. Swanson and Millard stood at each side of him, the tommy-guns cradled in their arms. Grimes had opened his huge mouth to speak when the first *crunch* came from the direction of the river. Sudden, sick alarm hit Grimes' face as if it had been thrown there like a glass of water. He visibly recoiled.

"Artillery!" Swanson gasped.

There was a rushing clatter as Grimes and his two guards hurried through the house and down the steps toward their foxholes. I sped across the perimeter and made a flying dive into my own foxhole. The second round of the barrage hit a hundred yards to the south. There was a pause while the Jap spotter corrected the fire, and the next round hit squarely in the middle of the perimeter.

This was the first time I had ever been under artillery fire.

The second shell in the perimeter exploded only 15 yards from my foxhole. I was jolted and shaken as the earth jerked around me. Dust sprang up from the ashes. Thereafter, at precise, 10-second intervals, a shell exploded in the perimeter. Far away there was the sound of the gun and, following a hardly perceptible pause, the approach of the shell could be heard. As each shell came closer its sound sharpened, but it never attained the pure whistle I had learned to expect from the movies. It was a sizzling whistle, and then there was a terrifying *KA-RAAAAASH!* It seemed that each shell was arching up to land squarely on me. I wanted desperately to jump free of my foxhole and run for the safety beyond the perimeter.

I was enveloped by great clouds of gray dust from the ashes. I hunched, face down, in my foxhole and held my helmet over my loins. I grunted just before each explosion.

I heard somebody rush past my foxhole and run toward the river. As he passed he was talking to himself in a frantic, tenor voice, urging himself to get away from here before he was killed. When the next shell exploded I heard him scream and soon the medic crawled past. I was strangely conscious of the sun's intense heat on my back. Another explosion showered me with dust and rocks and I braced myself again. The next explosion never came; I slowly let my muscles relax.

For perhaps two minutes I didn't try to move. Finally, with a heavy groan rising unbidden from my throat, I crawled sluggishly out of my hole and flopped in the dust.

"Who's hurt?" I heard Johnson call.

"Millard," the medic answered.

There was another silence before Sellers breathed from somewhere nearby, "Maybe the son'll die."

I rolled over to look. I was trembling hard. Four or five men were huddled about the sprawled figure of Millard.

"Dead," the medic announced.

"Good!" Sellers breathed triumphantly. "He had it coming for a long time."

"Who is it?" another voice called. It took some time for me to realize that this last shaky voice belonged to Captain Grimes.

"It's Millard, Waco," Johnson said.

"Millard!" Grimes shouted unbelievingly. "Millard? Millard?" Grimes walked dreamily across the perimeter. "Millard?" he called. "Millard!"

"Take it easy, Waco," Johnson said gently.

"Hey, Gifford's hurt!" Sellers cried.

I waved my hand negatively. "Just shaky," I said.

"Leave'im alone," Willie said. "He'll be all right in a minute."

"Hey, Savage, Morgan," Sellers called softly, but failing to keep the joy out of his voice, "Millard got it! Fragment cut his throat from *ear to ear!"* He cackled a soft, triumphant laugh.

"Well I be damn!" Savage muttered solemnly. "First time the Japs ever done anything to please me!"

Willie knelt over me solicitously. "About through, Sam?"

I took a deep breath. "Just about."

He lifted me gently to my feet. "Millard's dead."

"I know it," I said.

Willie grinned through the dirt on his face. "Ain't that the berries!"

The talk suddenly stopped. Captain Grimes passed carrying the limp corpse of Millard. The feet dangled loosely and the head, half-severed, bobbled crazily. Captain Grimes was crying silently.

Ignoring us, he carried the corpse to one of the foxholes under the house and quietly went to work burying it. He didn't use a shovel; he removed his helmet and scooped dirt into the hole until the corpse was no longer visible. Grimes turned, still without seeing us, and made his way unsteadily up the steps and out of sight in his house.

Terry said unbelievingly, "He was crying!"

"Yeah!" Sellers said.

For perhaps 10 seconds nothing happened. Johnson leaned calmly against the scaffolding of the lister bag, his head down, saying nothing, answering Terry's insistent questions with a keep-still gesture of his hand. I squatted on my haunches and waited, still slightly sick from my fit of trembling.

"We going on outpost, Little Joe?" Willie asked, using the code name in deference to Grimes.

"Don't know, Willie," Johnson said. "We'll just have to wait to find out." He sounded tired and irritated.

We waited. Johnson continued to stare at the ground, but the waiting was telling on him. He nervously fingered the band aid on his chin.

"Waco!" Johnson called. He raised his head and, eyes closed, called sharply, *"Waco!"*

Swanson, very pale, appeared at the window. "Go ahead and man the outposts," he said, surprisingly civil.

Johnson turned away without appearing to notice Swanson's civility. "Double column," he ordered. "Keep close to the ditch and keep your ears sharp for artillery. Move out."

With no noise other than the flap of canteens and the creak of leather rifle slings, the platoon filed out of the perimeter, strangely silent men whose elation over Millard's

death and the job of getting to the outposts was unconsciously chilled.

The outpost was a hill roughly shaped like Poppa's big English pipe with the bowl cut off sharply by the river which flowed below it.

We trudged on up. There were six men at the top of the hill, which was completely bald of trees. Ponchos had been stretched over a small ring of foxholes to hold off the blinding sun. The men weren't glad to see us and several of them made rough remarks about the fact that they had entertained the hope that we would be ambushed on our way up here. They didn't want to return to the George perimeter and Captain Grimes.

One of them, a big-handed giant, appeared to be the officer, Tom Thumb, for it was with him that Johnson talked while we exchanged places with the men who had been occupying the place. As soon as we were settled, Tom Thumb led his men down the hill and we were left alone. Johnson squatted by the radio so he could hear when the rest of the platoon had relieved the other men and were in position.

If a West Point upperclassman had been asked to imagine the perfect hill for a defensive outpost, this would have been it. The back of the hill dropped straight down to the river, 400 feet below, and the sides of the hill were so steep that climbing them after dark would be such a noisy maneuver that an ambush would be very easy. Only the stem of the pipe-shaped hill would offer a comparatively easy route of approach, and it was in that direction that the main firepower of the outpost—two 30-caliber machine guns and a Jap 51-caliber—was directed.

And we were provisioned to stand off an army. Resting in one of the big holes was a stack of some 20 cases of 10-in-one rations, which together with the C-rations we had brought, would last out almost any siege. Tom Thumb's men had left almost all of their ammunition, taking only a few rounds with them in case they ran into trouble during their return to George. There were two mortars, with stacks of antipersonnel and flare shells.

Johnson said, "Tom says they haven't heard a shot all week, except the artillery that hit the perimeter this morning."

"That," Willie said cheerfully, "is the kind of talk I like to hear."

"But what about the patrols we've been running into," I said.

Johnson gave me a sideways flip of his head and said to the others, "Wet-blanket Gifford they called him in college."

"The hell with it," Terry said. "Let's eat."

"This is Little Joe," Johnson said into the microphone of the radio. "Wilco, Roger. Out." He turned to us. "Grimes wants us to listen for artillery."

"You don't say!" Willie said.

"So he started talking again," Terry said.

"Lay off," Johnson said. "Millard was Grimes' best friend."

"Some friend," Willie said.

"His only friend," Sellers said. "None of the officers would have nothing to do with'im. Had to get a poor enlisted pig to—"

"All right," Johnson said quietly.

The joking stopped. Somehow, they seemed to understand exactly what Johnson had meant. Friendships, I was rapidly learning, were respected here, even Grimes' friendships.

I sat and thought about this strange man Grimes. The men hated him; it was more than a common dislike of a man. Their daily living was taken up mostly with hateful contemplation of him. A company commander is bound to have a few men who dislike him or doubt his intelligence and courage, but hatred for Grimes was like a disease. Aside from a certain respect for his friendship with a now-dead buddy, they gave him nothing but hatred. Later, when Johnson went out to pace off the lanes of fire, I went with him for no other purpose than to ask about Grimes.

Johnson smiled. "That's a long story, Sam. I'll tell you as much as I know in the morning, if you're still curious by then."

I had learned something of hatred on my own; there was certainly no doubt that I would still be curious tomorrow morning.

2

"Well, in the first place," Johnson said, "the boys are too hard on Grimes. They don't know all of the story and most of them haven't been too interested in hearing the rest of it. But I want you to understand this much: I don't like him any more than anybody else does. I've known him about seventeen months and if there ever was one, Grimes is a heel.

"But I've always had the feeling that he wasn't always that way, and not long ago I found out I was right. You know how it is: you can't hide anything in the Army. There'll always be somebody around that knew you back-when. And Bailey, the guy whose dog tags you brought in, served in the same regiment with Grimes back before Pearl Harbor.

"Grimes was a buck sergeant in those days and that explains why he still acts more like an old peacetime non-com than he does an officer. He was tough, but nobody ever said he was anything but fair. He expected the best from his men, even if they were making only twenty-one bucks a month. If he didn't get the best, Grimes rode hard till he got it. But once a man started delivering, Grimes let him alone.

"Incidentally, Grimes doesn't understand why the Guardsmen and draftees can't take rough talk like the boys in the Old Army could. Back in those days, a sergeant cursed you on the drill field, but he was your friend in the reck hall. Sometimes Grimes looks like his feelings are hurt when somebody looks mad about being called a dirty name. His trouble is, he doesn't understand civilians.

"Anyhow, back in the old days, Grimes was always in hot water over women. The way I heard it, he got a girl in trouble and the girl was underage. So he got a transfer to Honolulu. He did all right there and was about to get promoted. But he got into more woman trouble. Back in those days, it was routine to put guys in foul-up companies. Sometimes, if they broke an Army regulation, they got busted.

"Grimes got sent to a foul-up company, George Company of the —th Regiment, and the CO was Miles, a captain then. Millard was company clerk and Swanson was a supply clerk. Maybe that'll explain why they're such big buddies and why Grimes was so crazy when Millard got killed yesterday."

"Yeah."

"So Grimes did a good job with the foul-ups, and when you find a foul-up in the Old Army, you really find one. But Grimes really made a fine platoon out of his men. Finally, after a year, he'd served his time. Miles made a deal with Grimes: if Grimes would stay in the foul-up company, he'd make him first sergeant. Grimes stayed.

"Now Miles must've been even worse in those days than he is now, to judge from what Bailey told me. He could do almost anything he wanted to because he was commanding a convict company, for all practical purposes, and the rougher he was, the better the CO liked it. You know, white-glove inspection, revoking pass privileges for no reason, drilling men till midnight just for the hell of it—stuff like that.

"Grimes wasn't that rough. He insisted on a man's best and when he got it, he was happy. The whole thing boils down to this: Grimes liked discipline and good soldiering. It was the only thing he had ever done in his life that he

really liked. And the more he soldiered, the easier it was to stay away from women.

"Then he went back home—Texas—on furlough and while he was there he met a girl he wanted to marry. But she wasn't interested. He saw the girl every night, but she told him she was going to marry a civilian—another reason he doesn't like Guardsmen and draftees.

"So when Grimes came back to Honolulu, he was one hell of a sour character. Along about that time, a new foul-up came to his outfit and somehow or other the new guy found out about Grimes and the girl. He started riding Grimes about it. Now Grimes had a temper then, just like he has now, but he took top kicking seriously and managed to control himself. That kept on, the riding and all, and Grimes kept holding himself back.

"The night after the Japs hit Pearl Harbor, Grimes' company was bivouacked on the beach, waiting for the Japs to try a landing. Along about that time, the new foul-up started riding Grimes again about the girl. Miles was along and he told Grimes that no first sergeant of his was going to take that from anybody. Grimes said okay to that, gave the new foul-up a reaming, and forgot about it.

"Late that night one of the men reported something in the water a few yards off the beach. They sent up flares and saw something out there all right, and fired into it. It turned out to be a log, but that isn't the story.

"When daylight came, the new foul-up was found dead in his foxhole.

"Nobody knew how it happened. The guy's neck had been broken by a pretty strong man. Grimes hated the guy, was strong enough to snap his neck like a match stem, so he was the most likely suspect. Grimes would've been court-martialed right then, but Millard swore that Grimes hadn't been near the dead man since he'd given him the reaming.

"A week or so later, Miles came around and told Grimes he'd recommend him for a commission. Grimes said no. He didn't like officers much more than any other Regular. But Miles said take the commission or stand trial for murder. Grimes took the commission, of course. Miles couldn't stand to be refused, even when he was offering to do a man what he thought was a favor.

"The way it sounded to me, Miles hated to give up the foul-ups because he liked to push the men. The next best thing was to have a man along to do it for him, once he was sure he could force him into being as mean as he himself had been. And Grimes was the man.

"Well—it's been eating on Grimes till he's the king of heels. Every day and in every way, like they say, Grimes gets meaner and meaner.

"But he isn't all bad. The trouble is that Grimes loves the Army and the Army's using him for a screw-boy. To Grimes, that's sort of like his mother using him for a pimp."

He swept the binoculars toward the east. "So, if I were you, Sam, I wouldn't be too hard on Grimes. He's a bastard, all right, but it isn't all his fault."

3

The night was a calm one. Two guards were posted and five men slept. Johnson took his turn at guard without seeming to think much about his rank, and he stood it alone. Not once did the warning device, M-1 clips strung along an ankle-high telephone wire, jingle its merry note of danger. Nor did any dogs bark with excitement, another excellent warning. Johnson even gave permission to smoke, if we hid the glow of the butts carefully.

Below, in the gleam of the moon, the river flowed merrily along and not once was there any break in its reflection to indicate that the Japs were trying to float down it. The stars, seemingly close, twinkled peacefully, as gently as they had the night Jenny and I had parked on Hogback Ridge before the rainstorm. I spent the two hours of my guard duty thinking of her.

The next morning Willie, Sellers and Savage went out on a short patrol and returned before noon with the word that they had seen nothing. We ate our lunches and threw the cans over the cliff and watched them sail, seemingly without end, until they splashed gently into the river. The sun was bright, but it wasn't too uncomfortable under our ponchos. In the middle of the afternoon there came a rain which lashed furiously at us for a few minutes before the sky cleared and the bright, hot sun came out again. I kept my foxhole dry by digging a small trench around it to catch the drippings from the poncho.

Terry, the youngest of us, was eager to find out what the rest of us had done for a living in civilian life.

"Sharecropper," Willie said.

"Welder," Savage said.

"Loafer," Sellers said.

"Cotton business," I said.

"And," Willie added. "Terry was a pimp."

"Hell with you, Willie," Terry said and rushed on: "Hey, Little Joe, what'd you do?"

"Why, man," Johnson snorted, "haven't you heard? All officers were janitors in civilian life."

"No kidding," I said, "what'd you do?"

"I," said Johnson, "was one of several personnel directors for the Union Oil Company of California."

"Parade George, this is Parade George Charlie." Even the metalic rasp of the radio couldn't disguise the great, belching voice of Captain Grimes. *"Waco speaking. Let me talk to Little Joe. Over."*

Johnson took the microphone from my hand and, with a grimace of irritation, said, "Little Joe. Over."

"Waco. Get your map out." He paused to give Johnson time to unfold the map. *"Look at the sector of these coordinates."* He gave the code for a strip of woods east of Norzagaray.' *"A patrol report says it's full of Japs—maybe regimental strength. They're sending planes to clean it out."*

"Little Joe. What kind are they sending? Over."

"Waco. Twelve B-twenty-fours with five-hundred-pound bombs and right behind'em will be eight B-twenty-fives. The B-twenty-fives're the new kind with all the guns in the nose. I think they's a seventy-five millimeter in'em too. Over." Grimes' manner had certainly undergone a drastic change.

"Little Joe. Roger. Do I talk to them or do they just drop bombs and shoot at whatever moves? Over."

"Waco. You'll talk to'em. Wait." There was a short pause. *"The B-twenty-fours' call sign is Blue Nose One. The B-twenty-fives are Blue Yonder One. They'll call you first. Your channel is number six. Over."*

"Little Joe. Roger. Out." Johnson stooped to attend to the calibration of the radio. "I always get a kick out of watching an air strike," he mused. "This'll be the closest I've ever been to one. Tried to get in the Air Corps myself once."

"My brother-in-law's in the Air Corps," I said. This was the first time I had thought of Bill Joe in more than a year.

"What's his rank?" Johnson asked.

"Major, I think," I said. "We don't write to each other. My wife said he was expecting to make his majority pretty soon."

"Only a major, huh?" Johnson said. "How long's he been in?"

"Almost four years."

"Hmmm," Johnson said. "Must be a foul-up like us. After four years they're usually lieutenant generals. Friend of mine had a pet monkey in New Guinea that made major after only two years. He'd've made lieutenant colonel, but he was only sixteen years old. Seems like they have a rule that you can't make anything higher than major unless you're eighteen or over. But you know—"

"Howdy, Parade George, old man," the radio began—and Johnson made a belittling gesture toward its youthful voice, *"this is Blue Nose One, coming to rescue the ground forces. How do you read me? Over."*

"This is Parade George, sonny. Being an infantryman and not getting flight pay, I don't know how to read. But I can hear you Roger-five, sugar-five. Where are you? Over."

"Blue Nose One. I'm riding a bicycle down the middle of the Angat River; where'd you think I was? Over."

"Parade George. Oh, how clever you bus drivers are getting these days. I still can't see you. Over."

"All right, Dad. We will buzz your position in precisely thirty seconds. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for your invitation to come to your party. At the same time, I'd like to caution you about keeping within jumping distance of your foxholes. We have an apprentice with us today. Over."

Johnson winked at us. At the same time I heard the distant rumble of constant thunder, and, away to the south, a line of specks appeared.

"Okay, Sonny," Johnson said. "What's the apprentice's rank? Major or lieutenant colonel? Over."

"He's a field marshal in the Navy's submarine corps. Can you see us yet? Over."

"Affirmative. Over."

"Don't dodge the question. Answer a simple yes or nor. Over."

"Yes, we see you. Aren't you a little low? Over."

The heavy, slender-winged B-24's roared over the river, so low that we were looking down at them. Blue Nose One didn't answer Johnson's last transmission. But when the flight reached a position which seemed to be directly over the rice paddy, he called, *"Bombs away, Dad!"* Surely, I thought, this was going to be another example of the Air Corps' practice of dropping bombs where they weren't wanted or needed. For the bombs, visible now against the yellow straw of the rice paddy, seemed to race parallel to the ground. There were so many bombs that I couldn't count them. They disappeared against the line of trees and, a second later, came the first explosion. It was followed immediately by others in so rapid a sequence that it was one constant explosion.

The earth trembled violently and dust sprang up on the bald knob of our hill. The woods erupted in a turmoil of huge fireballs and deafening sound. Shock wave after shock wave pushed fiercely and then tugged at us with unbelievable force. It was impossible for anything to live in those trees. The sky, hundreds of feet into the air, was filled with debris, whole trees and huge stumps that rose and fell, revolving slowly, and landed with a crash that would have been tumultuous enough had it not been for the awesome comparison of the explosions of the bombs.

When Blue Nose One said lightly, *"Ta, ta, Dad,"* I felt a kind of shame because a man, after having exercised the power to unleash such tremendous destruction and violence, could have regarded his own doing in such a foolish, bantering farewell.

"My God," Willie said solemnly. In the silence that followed the bombs, Willie's voice sounded pitifully small and weak.

Johnson grunted with disgust. Sellers and Savage regarded the still boiling woods with eyes that plainly mirrored their sickness and awe. Terry, a happy grin on his face, his eyes dancing with excitement, stood at the edge of the cliff and watched the retreating B-24's with complete satisfaction.

The B-25's arrived 10 minutes later. The familiar shape of the bombers, the same type Doolittle had used to bomb Tokyo during the bleak months at the beginning of the war, had been altered somewhat by the blunt metal which replaced the shapely bubble of plastic in the nose. There was a cleft in the nose where the 75-millimeter cannon was placed. The remainder of the space there was taken up by the clustered muzzles of 50-caliber machine guns. There were eight bombers and, while seven of them circled lazily in the sky overhead, one of them, Blue Yonder One, prowled around among the hills while Johnson tried to vector him onto the target.

"Now it's behind you!" Johnson said, beginning to sound irritated. "Can't you see that strip of woods smoking? Over."

"Roger. Got it." There followed a string of instructions delivered in the jargon of the air, stuff seemingly as much calculated to make good reading in popular magazines as to facilitate rapid action. Then the second part of the air strike began.

The planes, in shallow power dives, roared overhead, coming so close to the top of our hill that their propwash blew clouds of dust into our faces. And, as they reached a point directly over our heads, they began firing. I huddled, miserable, buffeted by the roar and the air blast from this monstrous, miraculous product of man's ability to wreck punishment upon himself. Feeling a vague, disturbing sympathy for the targets of this insanity, I prayed for it to end.

But it wouldn't end. Again and again came the nerve-rending thunder of the engines as they roared a few feet over our heads and then began spitting their evil cackle of gunfire into the trees. As each plane neared the bottom of its dive, the 75-millimeter cannon in its nose punctuated the diatribe of depravity with its dull crack. It was strange that I felt no desire to run, nor was I questioning my own safety. All I felt was that this must stop.

It did end. Forming into squadron boxes, the B-25's bored away to the east, leaving a quip of a good-by from a young innocent voice trailing in the speaker of our radio. I clambered from my foxhole and blinked in the bright morning sun as if I had risen from a long, dark sleep.

"Jesus!" Willie murmured. "That's what I call just a little bit too close." His Adam's apple jerked convulsively twice and then he spat a long stream of tobacco juice over the cliff.

Sellers swallowed repeatedly and continued to direct curiously doubtful glances toward the torn and twisted woods. Terry's eyes were alive with excitement. Savage stood, grunted, and shook off the tumult of the past few seconds before he calmly began going about the task of cleaning the machine guns and BAR of the dust the planes had thrown into them.

On Johnson's face there was no expression at all, until with a tiny convulsion, his mouth tightened and relaxed.

"I could've done without that," I said.

"Parade George Able"—the net call for everybody—*"mail call. Mail call. Out. Parade George, this is Parade George Charlie. Send Little Joe down to the jeep with your mail detail. Over."*

"Parade George. Wilco. Out."

Johnson got to his feet. "Wonder what the hell he wants?" he said. "Anybody want to go with me?"

"Not me," Willie said.

"Nope," Sellers said.

"Nope," Terry said.

Savage shook his head.

I slung my rifle sling over my shoulder and buckled my cartridge belt. "Okay if I go?"

"Sure, Sam," Johnson said. "Willie, you're big brother. Send a water detail down to the river, will you?"

"I'll do'er, Joe," Willie said. looking at me as if he wanted to ask why I would like to go to the George perimeter. He shrugged.

Walking on our heels in an effort to act against the steep trail's rolling rocks, Johnson and I bounced down the hill. Johnson said nothing; he was entirely preoccupied with something else and I made it my business to maintain a lookout for stray Japs. They weren't likely to bother us during the daylight hours, when our superior marksmanship was most effective against them, but they had shown a degree of uncharacteristic aggressiveness lately. And the Japs like to do, occasionally, what was unexpected of them.

We walked on. I said, "How'd you get sent to George Company, Joe?"

He smiled. "Remember the night after Colonel Cozzens got killed? Miles sent Able Company on that wild-goose chase. When I got back—with three wounds—I got madder than hell, told Miles off, and the next morning I found myself in George. Grimes got there a few days later."

"And you've been hearing him yell ever since."

"No, not quite. When Grimes first came—the first couple of months, that is—he wasn't so bad. He of course acted like an Old Army non-com, but he did some good soldiering. It wasn't long after Miles refused the medals that Grimes started acting like a number one, gold-plated heel."

4

THE JEEP WAS WAITING in Angat, Johnson reached it first and left the front seat for me. The driver eased around and we drove through the ruins of the town, moving no faster than five miles an hour because a little dust is a fine target for artillery. Two P-38's roared past, a few feet over our heads, and gave us a friendly waggle of wings before they thundered into a shallow climb.

The George perimeter had undergone a change. Nothing was moved; the jeep, when we dismounted, was parked in its usual position; the lister bag still hung from its scaffold; the stack of ammunition, slightly reduced in size, was still there. But something was missing. Johnson paused and glanced at me. With a slight grimace of puzzlement, he raised his eyebrows and lowered them into a frown. Then I knew what it was:

Instead of sullen faces, I saw men standing about with various expressions of alarm.

Then I saw the cause. Captain Grimes, who left his orderly room in the house only when an emergency drove him to his foxhole, was seated on an upturned grenade case squarely in the middle of the perimeter. He was bareheaded and his half-bald head glistened sweatily in the bright sun; his sleeves were rolled up close to his armpits. The massive shoulders sagged and the head was bowed. In his hand was a three-foot length of rope, which he twitched endlessly in the dust at his feet. Between his legs rested the radio; the telephone was in his lap.

Johnson shrugged and motioned for me to follow him. We stopped in front of Captain Grimes, who for a long time, continued to stare woodenly at his feet.

Our presence was finally acknowledged by a weary, sideways lift of his head as Grimes peered at us. His eyes didn't focus promptly and it appeared to me that he didn't know, during the first brief seconds, who we were. He mumbled unintelligibly and then, without lifting his head, offered a tentative hand to be shaken. Johnson, caught with the unexpected, hesitated awkwardly before he shook it.

The rope stopped twitching. Grimes said, rousing himself slightly, "I transferred Swanson back to Regimental this morning." The rope suddenly snapped at the earth. "That sneaking little son!" he thundered. He subsided. "Nothing but a spy, that was Swanson." The rope resumed its twitching.

Johnson cleared his throat. "You want me to send a patrol out to see what the air strike did?"

"Aw—" He stopped, undecided. "Aw, I don't know. Do what you think's right. But if you do, be sure nobody don't get hurt."

Johnson glanced absently at me. "I'll go myself, Waco. But there won't be any trouble. The air strike was pretty rough."

There was a pause, during which Grimes continued to switch the rope across the dust at his feet.

"You come down for any special reason, Joe?" he said. He had forgotten that he had ordered Joe down.

Johnson started to speak, stopped himself quickly, and began again. "No, just a little change of scenery, Waco. Came with Sam to get the mail."

"Cobb's got the mail." Grimes said absently.

Johnson dismissed me with a nod. As I was leaving, Johnson seated himself on the ground beside Grimes. I found the mail clerk, Cobb, in the house. He recoiled with alarm when I opened the door and a packet of letters fell from the desk.

"Hey!" he said sharply. "Do something, make a noise, next time before you come in. I thought you were Grimes."

"Sorry."

"Hell, don't apologize to *me!* I'm just a flunky around here."

Unable to think of a balm to Cobb's irritation, I plunged in: "Look. How about letting me in on what's going on around here."

"That crazy fool out there"—he gestured violently with a thumb—"he's going to get us all killed. Last night, after you guys warned us to look out for Japs, Grimes crawled off his grenade case and started walking around the damn perimeter! Right in the middle of the night! Popping that rope he's been carrying all time. Had to see how the men were getting along! Talking too! Stop by a hole, look at the moon. *Mumbling!* If the Japs'd found us, he'd be one dead captain, and that would be O.K. with me."

"How long's this been going on?"

"Why, ever since Old Army buddy got it. Got a grenade case, walked out in the middle of the perimeter and sat down. Hasn't moved since. Playing with that rope. Hasn't slept! Tom Thumb made him eat a K-ration this morning.

"Walked in on old Swanson and started yelling to beat hell: 'Get out of my sight, you damn spy!' Hit old Swanson and kicked him down the steps. I drove Swanson to Regimental and damn if old Swanson wasn't saying he was going to get Colonel Miles after Grimes. Grimes ain't said a word to nobody since."

"That's better than being insulted, isn't it?"

"I'd rather be insulted by him than have him drawing sniper fire. And he was the one that was so scared of snipers, too."

"Did he try to draw fire?"

"You're durn right, he did! One fired at us a few times yesterday. Every time he fired that Grimes would stop popping his rope for a little bit, then *swish, swish!* I hope he gets his head blown off."

"So Swanson got kicked out, huh?"

"That's what I said."

"How'd Grimes act when he kicked him out?"

"Just walked in and started yelling. Swanson started that whining stuff he pulls. Grimes backed him into that corner and knocked hell out of him. Old Swanson's head hit the wall like a ton of lead." Here Cobb paused to chuckle. "I thought he was going to get killed, but he didn't. And when Grimes kicked him down the steps, he yelled, loud as hell, 'Go see what Miles thinks about *that,* you damn spy!' Then he turned around and looked right at me. 'I always told Millard, Swanson was no damn good. That spy!' Then he walked out and stood on his box and yelled, 'From here on in, men, we're going to do some soldiering around this company!' And he's been sitting on that grenade case ever since."

"I see."

He tossed me a packet of letters. "No packages worth delivering. Wish those women in the States would stop sending the damn things." He tossed a couple of crushed packages into the wastebasket. They had at one time contained cakes. He clumped angrily out of the house. "First platoon!" he yelled. "Mail call!"

I waited by the lister bag while Johnson finished his talk with Grimes. The men had gathered at the house to get their mail. I noted that, when they crossed the perimeter to approach the house, they made a rather wide detour around Grimes and his grenade case. I sorted my mail out by the date on the postmark and read it while I waited for Johnson.

Jenny was still shocked by her father's death, but she tried in one letter to be lighthearted. The letter, designed to cheer me up, caused one to experience such a violent surge of desire that I felt dizzy. I became aware of a dull ache in my forehead.

The letters were all addressed to T/Sergeant Samuel F.

Gifford. Recon Platoon, so she hadn't received the note Ray Mosby had written about the court-martial. I was stunned with desire and homesickness. But Gray's Landing was so far away, and Miles had promised that George Company men would be the last ones to benefit from the rotation plan. I hated Miles viciously then. I could have easily killed him if he had been present.

"We better get moving, Sam," Johnson said. I realized that he had been standing beside me for some time.

"Oh!" I fell in step beside him. "Didn't see you."

"Letters from your wife, huh?" he asked absently.

"Yes."

"I got a few to read after a while myself." He was preoccupied again.

We walked toward Angat in the hot, morning sun. To the east of Norzagaray a heavy, angry cloud was beginning to boil up, forewarning of a rain before noon. There was a soft breeze, but it wasn't enough to cool the sweat on my back. Johnson said nothing until we reached the bend near the first outpost, where he glanced at the top of the hill with absent-minded professionalism. Preoccupied as he was, Johnson, during his too many years as a combat officer, had become the professional soldier he hated so much, for he unthinkingly turned a sourly critical eye upon those functions under his command. I was sure, that morning, that his defense of Grimes often had been subconsciously one of loyalty to a fellow officer as much as it had been one of fair play.

"Savage'll be waiting for us in Angat," he said. "We're going to go see about the results of that air strike."

"Grimes'll be in one hell of a lot of trouble," Johnson added suddenly, "before this day is over."

"Huh?" I recovered: "How's that?"

"Miles."

"Oh. What happened to Grimes?"

"Swanson's what happened to him. Miles sent Swanson out to keep an eye on Grimes. I'll have to admit that I didn't know that. And it makes me think a little better of Grimes, knowing what he had to put up with. It must be hell, an Old Army man having every move watched by a mealy-mouthed little son like Swanson."

"Millard was nobody's angel."

"No, he was a louse all right. He's another example of the Old Army man getting all he can while getting's good. Something else. Grimes is trying to give up."

"Oh?" I said. The subject somehow embarrassed me. "Looks to me like he's trying to get shot by a sniper."

"He is," Johnson said. "That's one way of giving up." Johnson spat. "Last thing Grimes said was, 'Wish to hell I'd never taken that commission.' "

5

The rain began when we passed the old church in Angat. Johnson didn't appear to notice it, but Savage, somewhat of a professional soldier himself, glanced irritably at the sky, pulled his cap down over his eyes to keep the mist away, and tried vainly to protect the action of the BAR. His shoulders were squared; he was quite angry.

Johnson led us along the edge of the paddy, next to the woods. He was confident that the Japs had evacuated the woods after they had been discovered yesterday afternoon.

But the Japs hadn't evacuated and the woods had become their sepulcher. Some had no doubt escaped, for there had been a pause between the bombing and the strafing, during which the survivors could have fled, but the Japs had gambled that we wouldn't call planes in on them. The 500-pound bombs had performed their function with a dispatch that their designers would have admired. The trees were mute bearers of a bloody fruit. Torn, slashed bodies had been thrown about with the abandon of a careless giant. It made me remember a history of the Civil War I had once read in which the streams had run red at the height of the battle. The familiar stench was beginning to rise already. The searing heat of the sun before the rain had hastened that. I shuddered because the rain, dripping through the trees, was often stained.

I unexpectedly gagged and had to swallow rapidly to prevent vomiting. I cried out in alarm when a tree, its branches moved by the torrential rain, dropped a sleeved arm on my shoulder.

"Joe!" I cried imploringly.

"All right," he said. "It's enough for me too."

Savage and I fell in behind him eagerly; we were pleased when he abruptly broke into a trot. We jogged through the rain, our boots sloshing and sucking at the muddy paddy, and we didn't slow to a walk until we were a safe hundred yards from the woods.

I spat, trying to force a bad taste out of my mouth. "That's something I wish I hadn't seen."

6

To the four points of the compass, the sky was clear and I could see the glistening stars, but directly overhead the moon was obscured by a huge, dark cloud. There was an illusion of light, but it was so dark I was never sure that I could see the line of trees that marked the boundary of the hill's bald knob.

Remembering last night's attempt, we had set up one of the mortars so it could drop shells into the river upstream. The other mortar pointed straight up, ready to use for flares. But there was no reflecting bar of moonlight on the river tonight. If the Japs attempted to float down, there was nothing we could do to hinder them.

The night was choked with woolly silence. It seemed to form a wall about me which hid a sinister apparition. I strained, feeling that I might have gone suddenly deaf—and heard the ticking of Johnson's wrist watch. It hung on the mortar sight, glowing dimly in the blackness.

The bark of the dog was like a flash of lightning in the black heart of night. I listened intently, but I couldn't tell whether the dog was in Angat or away to the north. He barked again, excited now, yelping, I tossed a stone into Johnson's foxhole. He sat up immediately. Savage, Sellers. Terry and Willie also changed the rhythm of their breathing; then, while Johnson and I cocked our heads to listen into the night, the four men stood erect in their foxholes. The dog barked again, paused indecisively, and launched into a steady yelp of fear. Then, with a piercing cry of pain, he fell silent. Now it was plain that he was neither in Angat nor north of us. His bark had come from somewhere near Parade George three.

For 30 minutes, there was nothing. Patience, I thought hysterically, is the Jap's most effective weapon. We waited tensely, and I could hear the individual breath of each man. Johnson reached for the radio and punched out the warning signal, four longs, on the butterfly switch. The other outposts had heard the dog too, for they acknowledged the warning quickly. The night remained silent.

"Keep your eye on the trail, Willie," Johnson whispered.

Willie turned his back to the cliff and the rest of us watched in the direction of George three. My throat was dry and constricted. I had an overwhelming urge to cough and massaged my Adam's apple frantically in an attempt to squelch it. Finally, unable to hold it back, I emitted a short half-snort, half-cough that made the others jerk with alarm. I foolishly considered an apology.

I thought I heard the unmistakable rustle of clothing brushing against something, but it left my mind, for, away to the east, there came the somehow unexpected burr of a BAR, followed, after a short pause and another burst of fire, by the bursting light of a flare over the George four outpost.

At the same time a voice, tenor with fear and cracked with haste, broke through the radio: *"Parade George four under attack by—"* And that was all he said. His voice broke, then he coughed and a second later the butterfly switch was released.

The flares continued to rise and burst over George four hill. "You're sending them up too fast!" Willie whispered tightly. From here the flares, when they burst, made almost inaudible puffs of sound before they exploded into a pin-point of brilliance in a sea of blackness.

It was war-engendered instinct rather than superior hearing that caused me to detect the muted *clunk* as a sound different from the burst of the flares and the gunfire from George four. I whirled about and dropped a flare shell into the tube, but before it burst there was a bright flash and a heavy *KA-RACK!*, followed immediately by a heavy, hoarse gasp. During the brief flash of light I saw Sellers' body, half-severed at the waist from the explosion of the grenade, flop sluggishly from his foxhole. The Japs had exploded the grenade directly under him.

Grabbing the grip of the machine gun in front of my foxhole, I jabbed it down toward the trail and searched the blackness for a target. Then the light of the flare burst overhead. I saw nothing. The bald knob of our hill, basking in the eerie one-dimensional light, was empty. There was no movement among the trees. Indeed, the only motion on the entire hill was the queer fishlike gasping of Sellers' mouth. His eyes rolled and his mouth, flecked by an eruption of red foam, snapped shut with a click clearly audible in the onerous silence.

"Another flare, Sam," Johnson said clearly and calmly. And to all of us: "Don't look at Sellers."

Momentarily paralyzed, I hesitated almost too long to drop the flare into the tube and the first one was dropping into the trees before the new one burst.

"All right," Johnson said crisply. "Willie, shove those grenades along the line. Each man take a case."

In the bright silence, Willie heaved the heavily laden cases, using one to push the other, until each of us had a full case in front of his foxhole.

"No more flares," Johnson said. "Now, each of you get a grenade—pull pin—one—two—three—*throw!*" The trees and bushes were lashed to a fury by the explosions and the thousands of steel fragments whistled insanely overhead. "Grenade—pull pin—one—two—three—*throw!*" Again the trees dipped and shook with the blast. "Grenade—pull pin—one—two—three—*throw!*" We threw five more before Johnson said, "No more grenades. Machine guns! *Now—HOSE'EM DOWN!*"

During the instant before the machine guns began firing, I heard Sellers' breath stop in the middle of his last, desperate attempt to retain his grip on life. With a final, wistful sigh, he relaxed. Then I pressed the trigger and saw, lancing out ahead of me, the round fire of the muzzle blast and the arrow-like tracers.

My own machine gun hammered ruthlessly and I was aware that, to my left, Savage was methodically traversing his lane of fire with the other 30. To my right Willie, having taken Sellers' BAR from beneath the body, was firing in evenly spaced bursts of four. Terry was chuckling and emptying clip after clip from his M-1. My machine gun was reaching a critical temperature when I heard shave-and-a-haircut banged out on the 51 Johnson fired. I released the trigger.

I listened for cries from the Jap wounded, but our grenades and machine guns had evidently done no good, for there was no sound other than our own hoarse breathing and the firing at George three. We waited. On the other side of our hill there came the sudden clatter of machine gun and rifle fire from George one. Another second passed and there was a glow and the sound of more gunfire from George four.

Surely, I thought desperately, we at least wounded some Japs with all that violent firing. But the Japs—if they were there—made no sound.

But they were there and, because of the noise from the other outposts, I wasn't sure that I had heard the several sounds of *clunk* that came from the trees somewhat to the left of the trail, but I yelled, *"GRENADES!"* and waited. They came like a shower of gruesome hailstones. One of them, apparently having been arched high, smashed down on my foot. I leapt wildly from my foxhole and flattened myself against the ground. The explosion came then. It deafened me, made my ears ring achingly, but it was not the one that wounded me. A grenade, which had alighted near Sellers' body exploded like a bolt of lightning and peppered my shoulder with tiny fragments and stones. I jumped back into my foxhole. Three or four of the Japs' grenades had rolled over the cliff and exploded with terrifying cracks behind me. Some of the grenades had been duds—not unusual with Japs—for I hadn't heard as many explosions as I had heard clunks. The Japs had a primitive cap on their grenades; to arm them they had to be smashed against something solid and the Japs usually used their helmets for that purpose.

"Anybody hurt?" Johnson asked quietly.

"I got peppered," I said. My voice was surprisingly strong and clear.

"If you're hurt bad," Johnson said, "come on over and I'll fix you up."

"I'm all right."

"You're sure?"

"Yeah."

"Good," he said. "Hang on. There's more to come."

Fumbling in the blackness, I examined my shoulder with my fingers. There were spots of blood and a few scratches, but I was still able to fight. It would be stiff tomorrow and there would be an infection if I didn't treat it as soon as there was daylight, but the arm was still strong and capable of doing its share. And it would be tested soon, for the main attack was yet to come. I stared into the blackness until my eyes bulged.

When the machine-gun fire began, it seemed that it was firing directly into my face—a common illusion during a night fight—and for a moment I thought I was going to die. During that brief lapse of time I was filled with a new exhaustion and, stranger still, an odd resignation, for it was foolish, I reasoned solemnly, to hope to outlast the war. I ducked and heard somebody grunt amazingly loud. It took me a moment to realize that the grunt had come out of me.

It was a Nimbu submachine gun. There was no mistaking the slow fire of the gun we had so often called a "woodpecker." Bullets struck the tripod of my machine gun, sending a thousand sparks flying before the gunner moved his fire to sweep over the other foxholes. This was an old trick and, I said aloud, "You won't fool *me*, you bastards!" I hated them insanely and their cheap, Oriental tricks. Japs seldom fired into a perimeter at night. They preferred the more suicidal tactics of rushing us. When they did fire, it was for but one purpose: they wanted to pin us down by firing from an oblique angle while another party moved in close enough to make a short, headlong rush immediately after the firing stopped. Taking a chance that the gunner was firing over the other foxholes, I jumped to my feet, dropped a flare into the tube and ducked. The Nimbu stopped firing.

Jumping back to my feet, I traversed the machine gun wildly across the slope of the knob. I didn't bother to aim. I realized absently that I was uttering a long, low grunt, as if I were straining to lift something heavy. I heard the men in the other foxholes firing too. The flare burst.

Only a few yards away, their shoulders low, their heads back to reveal the reflection of the flare in their amazingly slanted eyes, rushing at us with terrifying speed, were the Japs. They ran with their legs far apart, flat-footed. Leading them was the only truly big Jap I had ever seen. He was well over six feet. He wore a uniform of a darker hue than was on the others. My mind automatically registered that he was an Imperial Marine. I saw, too, that he clutched, in one

big hand, two grenades, which he was in the act of throwing. They smashed against his helmet, the eyes darted about for a target, and he found me. The other Japs spread out and, running directly into our fire, sought their men to kill.

The big Jap had lowered his head now, pushing with brutal, fanatic courage, toward me. It had become a contest between my machine gun and my courage to keep it firing and his brutal charge. With the same slowness that I had known for more than three years, I watched the ball-like tracers from my machine gun wheel toward him and feel for his chest. But he was too low. With the heel of my left hand, I held the machine gun steady and waited for him to run into the lane of fire. I was firing from ground level and he would have to run through a hail of steel to reach me. This Jap was going to die; I knew he was going to die. But he was laced with fiery fanaticism and, accepting death as inevitable, he was going to make certain that I died too. From now on it was my gamble: if his strength fails, my bullets will smash him down.

But I didn't kill him. He died at the hand of his own brutal courage. My first tracer to reach him jabbed at his shoulder, not where there was solid enough flesh to stop him because his kind had to be shot in the vital areas of the chest or head, but it deflected his charge. He missed my foxhole and, his head still down, he charged bull-like over the rim of the cliff and fell, silently. The two grenades in his hand killed him.

I didn't release the trigger. Two Japs, hidden by the big Marine, had been rushing Savage and they ran headlong into my fire. Both of them dropped like heavy sacks, their heads perforated by my bullets. The grenades they held in their hands exploded before I could duck and fragments sang angrily about my ears. My helmet rang dully with the impact of flying steel. Another Jap was so jarred by bullets from Johnson's 51 that his helmet fell over his eyes and he charged madly over the cliff and fell, screaming hideously until he was silenced by his grenades, into the river below. Willie, firing the BAR with its snout no more than a foot away from one of the bandy little creatures, was holding the Jap off by the sheer power of the BAR's muzzle velocity. It was the comic relief of a nightmare. The Jap, clutching crazily at the muzzle, finally crumpled at the edge of Willie's foxhole. Willie scrambled after the Jap's grenades and threw them, left-handed, I dully noted, over the cliff. Both of them burst no more than a yard from the edge, sending up a snarling canopy of fragments.

My entire body shook with one violent convulsion and I regained my self-control. I dropped another flare into the tube.

A Jap, so short that he appeared to be a child, was hit and he fell, as if he had been tripped, into Terry's foxhole. Terry, giggling merrily, hopped out of his hole and flattened himself against the ground until the Jap's grenades exploded, then he hopped blithely back into the foxhole with the shredded Jap. I had one final glimpse of Terry's happy grin as he dumped the dead Jap out.

There were three Japs working on Johnson. One of them was already wilting under the fire of his 51, which he held tilted back on the two rear legs of the tripod as he blasted a rapid arc in front of him. I whirled my own gun around and fired a blast at the Jap nearest Johnson and, while this one dropped, I changed my fire to the other one, who, caught between my fire and Johnson's, was held suspended for seconds before he slowly fell away to one side. Johnson leapt frantically from his foxhole as the Jap fell into it and dived headlong behind the protective body of Sellers. There were three grenade explosions under the Japs, whose bodies were tossed roughly aside, and there was the familiar whine of fragments; then there was silence.

"Another flare," Johnson rasped.

I dropped a flare and Johnson rose to his feet and stood erect. Huddled as I was in my foxhole, he appeared to me as a giant. With the mechanical precision of the most complex machinery, Johnson paced from one Jap body to the next, adroitly firing a shot from his pistol into each toothy, yellow face. He passed Sellers' body without a glance.

The flare flickered and its light dimmed out to leave us in blackness again. Eight corpses, one American, seven Japs. Five men alive, their breath rasping like the scratchings of monster crickets. I was bathed in burning sweat.

The fit of trembling struck suddenly, as if I had received a blow to the heart. It penetrated to my bones and smashed me down into my foxhole, where I lay, quivering and jerking, a useless wad of doughlike flesh.

"Oh, my God," I heard myself say. "No more. No more. *Please*, no more!"

"Not so loud, Sam," Johnson said gently. "Try to hold it down a little, boy."

"I don't belong here," I said over and over. "I don't belong here."

Somebody dropped into my foxhole and gathered me into his arms. I was rocked gently back and forth. "Take it easy, Sam boy," Willie murmured, as if to a child awakening from a nightmare. "Take it easy, boy. Easy now. You'll be all right pretty soon."

His voice murmured on into the impenetrable night.

7

DAWN BROKE and the sun came. We stumbled from our foxholes and surveyed the damage we had suffered. I instinctively ducked when I heard the distant crack of a sniper's rifle. His bullet, fired from a great distance, probably from another hill, droned past.

"Keep ducking," Johnson said, "if he keeps firing. Long's he thinks he's getting close, he won't change his sight readings."

I sat on the edge of my foxhole, trying to rub the aching smart from my eyes. The corpse of Sellers, which had been almost blown into two pieces by the initial blast, had received fragments until it was ripped and blasted from head to foot.

Johnson grimaced slightly. "Willie," he said quietly, "you and Savage bury Sellers. Sam, you and Terry get rid of the Japs." He picked up the microphone and began asking for casualty reports from the other outposts.

Willie took his entrenching tool and scooped up the crust by Sellers' body. It had once been a puddle of blood, but it had congealed and hardened. Willie threw it over the cliff. Then he helped Savage dig Sellers' grave. I stripped my jacket off and tried to get iodine on the places where I had been peppered by the Jap grenade last night. But I couldn't reach all of them. Johnson beckoned for me to sit in front of him and, while he talked to the other outposts on the radio, he smeared my shoulder. He patted my head when he was through.

We ducked as the sniper fired again.

The sniper fired again.

"Terry, damn it," Willie said, "you forgot to duck."

Terry looked up. "Oh!" he said placidly. "Well, I'll duck next time.

"Make sure you do," Willie said. "Don't take chances at our expense. Joe said duck. You duck, hear?"

"All right, Willie," Terry said agreeably.

Terry whispered, "Sellers'n Willie was close.

I hadn't known that. "Oh," I whispered.

Terry and I finished rifling the Japs' pockets. Johnson was still busy on the radio.

"Willie," I called, "what'll we do with these Jap bodies?"

Willie glanced at Johnson, who was too busy to be bothered. "Throw'em over the bluff," he said shortly.

Terry and I did so.

Savage and Willie had finished digging the grave and Savage sat down to rest. Willie approached Sellers' body and gently picked it up, cradled it in his arms, carried it to the

grave and placed it carefully, full-length, in the earth. For a moment I thought Willie was going to speak over the body, but, instead, he turned to pick up his shovel, with which he began rapidly tossing dirt over the body. The hole filled, Willie wrenched a limb off one of the trees and, using his shovel as a sledge, pounded it into the earth at the head of the grave.

"Sam," he said, "you remember the time that the guy got up and called old Colonel Miles a murdering old bastard right in front of the whole regiment?"

"Yes."

"Well"—Willie spat with a quick side motion of his head—"that was Sellers." He picked up a clod and ground it between his fingers until it was dust, which he sifted between his fingers. "That Sellers was one hell of a good man. They wasn't a better man in the whole regiment. He never done nothing more'n plant cotton and go to drill on Monday night. Worked hard on his crop too." Without pause: "Course you wouldn't know about how hard it is to bring in a good crop. But *he* did. He . . ."

No, I thought, I wouldn't know how hard it is to bring in a good crop. My civilian life had been one pleasant episode after another. It should've been, I thought ruefully—it was certainly mapped out carefully enough.

I remembered the day I had tried to drink coffee with Carr and Raker. Once that incident had been an island of unpleasantness in a sea of happiness, but now I understood the resentment that caused it. Nosir, Willie, I thought. I wouldn't know about bringing in a good crop, but there are a few things I do know.

I wondered now, were it possible for Colonel Cozzens to be alive, if he would have commanded the quality of unwavering respect today that was so easily his during those violent, innocent days of the first island campaign. Would he have commanded the same sort of respect that Little Joe Johnson got? I asked myself. Without knowing why, but at the same time caring intensely, I doubted it. For all those young men who had come to this war with an attitude akin to the romanticism of the Victorian soldier, there was nothing upon which they could hang the symbols of their accomplishments. Their officers were no longer the rich planters like Colonel Cozzens; instead they looked to men like Little Joe for their leadership. And they found it. It was always present.

So, on a hill where I had last night witnessed the death of a former cotton laborer, I, of Gray's Landing, had emerged from the final curtain of my isolation to become a man of the Twentieth century, whether I liked it or not.

". . . even if he never done much talking," Willie was saying, "specially after he come to George, he done his job right and carried his load—and more'n that—lots of times, without griping."

Too many young men, I thought, have carried more than their own load, and most of the time they didn't understand—

The sniper fired again and we ducked.

"Looks like we had a general uproar last night," Johnson said. He glanced at his notebook. "George perimeter lost a man, George three lost one, George four got two wounded, George six got one wounded—and we lost Sellers." He snapped the notebook closed and placed it in his jacket pocket. "Next time I hear about some general saying the war on Luzon's over, I'm going to stomp his face in." He began rolling his sleeves up with short, angry motions. "Grimes says he can send a replacement to George four, but that's all he's got. The roadblock got it last night too and he had to send four men down there to beef them up." He began rolling the other sleeve. "Looks like the Japs're trying to save face and make up for the beating they took at the first of the campaign. Every one of our outposts've got a sniper firing on them." He cleared his throat and spat over the cliff.

"What's worrying me is that I can't figure out where they're all coming from," he said. "If they're moving around our flanks, those boys in King and Fox ought to be able to stop them. But the CO's of King and Fox both say they've had a little trouble too."

"How about the companies on the west end of the line?" Willie asked.

"They haven't heard a shot nor seen a Jap in the last two weeks. I guess the Japs were looking for the outposts the farthest apart—and you can be pretty damn sure George would get those."

The sniper fired again.

"Anyhow," Johnson went on, "they don't have the men for a general break-through. They'll just have to be happy at doing a face-saving job by knocking hell out of a few guys stashed out on a hill or two."

8

WILLIE FIXED OUR LUNCH because he had bragged about his prowess with the frying pan on the deer hunts he had enjoyed as a civilian. He rifled the contents of four 10-in-one rations to make certain the meal was a definite variation from what we had been used to.

"Better take it easy on the chow," Johnson said.

"Hell, might as well use'em up," Willie said. "We'll be pulling out of here in not too long." He handed each of us a can containing the first course of the meal. "Chow call."

I placed the can at the edge of my foxhole, fished my spoon out of my cargo pocket, wiped it with my handkerchief, made myself comfortable and ate. It was good. The sun had heated the food, meatballs and spaghetti, and even the water, with its lacing and purifier, wasn't bad.

"Not bad, Willie," I said. "That doesn't taste like ordinary meatballs and spaghetti. What'd you put in it?"

He grinned. "I spit a little tobacco juice in it," he said. "Here, pass this can along to Savage."

I handed the can to Terry. "Pass it on," I said.

Terry took the can and reached it toward Savage's foxhole. "Hey, Savage, you old son!" Terry called gaily. "Chow call, you sleepy-headed draft dodger."

Savage didn't stir. Terry tossed a handful of dirt into the foxhole, but Savage slept soundly. Terry, clutching the can, crawled out of his foxhole. He lifted Savage's poncho. "Peek-a-boo, Savage! I see you! I'm about to catch you—" He dropped the edge of the poncho and scampered back to his own foxhole. "Oh, God," he said weakly. And at the same time he picked up his can of food and threw it over the cliff.

"What's the matter, Terry?" I said.

"Joe," Terry said. His voice had the peculiar timber of fear. "Joe," he said. "Joe—he's looking right at me."

Johnson paused, his spoon halfway to his lips.

"Joe," Terry said, "you better take a look."

Johnson gave Terry a searching stare. Slowly he lowered his spoon and replaced it in the can. "Dead?" he asked.

"Oh, God," Terry said. "He was looking right at me."

"All right," Johnson said gently. "You just don't look at him, Terry. Sam and I'll take care of it."

During that moment, Johnson's order became the most important words that had ever been spoken to me. "Let's go, Sam." Automatically, with a reflex born of training, I half rose before I stopped and sank back into my foxhole. A breeze caught the edge of Savage's poncho and revealed what the sniper had done. Savage, his head canted slyly to the side, was staring fixedly into blackness. The bullet had made only a small black and blue spot where it had emerged over his left eye.

This was the last picture I could see. There had been the raw beef of the Jap officer's face during my first night in combat. There had been the wild eyes staring from the stranger's face that had once belonged to Webster. There had been the surprised expressions on the faces of Meleski and

Raker. And last night there had been Sellers. And now, Savage.

Gently, I began trembling. "I'd better not," I said.

Johnson exploded, "Now, look, Sam—"

I held my trembling hands aloft for him to see.

"Oh," Johnson said. "I thought you said that didn't start till the fight's over."

I studied my hands, tried to control them. "This is the first time," I said evenly. "That's why I figure I'd"—I took a deep breath—"better not help with Sellers."

Johnson understood instantly. "Yeah, it sort of gets me too, Sam. How about you, Willie?"

Without a word, Willie got to his feet, spat, and came forward, leaning to pat my shoulder as he passed. He picked up his shovel, which he had wordlessly used to dig the grave of his own best friend, and began hacking and scraping at the stubborn earth. Watching him, I thought: Willie's the kind of man I needed for a friend when I was a civilian. And: He will be—if I'm ever a civilian again.

Johnson eased the corpse out of the foxhole and stretched it out on the ground. Carefully keeping my eyes away from the staring, sightless face, I watched while he removed the personal effects from the pockets. He picked up the wallet.

"Here," Terry said roughly, "leave that alone. I'll do it." For the first time, Terry acted more like a man than a boy. I had seen his kind before; the perennial boy until that shadowy point is reached where something breaks in the soul. The eyes of the corpse had been enough, I thought.

Johnson rose without a word and let Terry take the personal effects. Terry hunched over the neat pile—the wallet and the pictures—as if he wanted to protect its mute privacy. Terry suddenly looked very young to me, and quite small too. He was a—

"BANZAI! BANZAI!"

Waddling like a crab, a Jap emerged from the trees, his legs far apart, running as if he couldn't get his feet together. He scrambled up the last few yards of the grade and directed himself toward Willie and Johnson, still croaking *"BANZAI! BANZAI!"* in a cracked tenor voice. He sounded like a child playing a silly game. About his neck there dangled an anti-tank mine. Willie and Johnson, so dumbfounded by a daylight attack that they couldn't move for an instant, stood and stared stupidly at the little Jap.

With one motion, I curled my finger around the trigger of my machine gun, pulled, and whirled it around as it fired. The tracers slanted across a short arc and the Jap met them full in the chest. With a deafening roar, he exploded and the concussion threw me violently against the back of my foxhole, almost knocking the breath from me.

Willie and Johnson were thrown sprawling. They jumped to their feet and raced to their foxholes, leaving Savage's body, its legs thrown wide apart by the blast, hands at its sides, to wait for its grave.

"BANZAI!" Another Jap burst out of the trees and this one carried a mine too. A faint trail of smoke drifted behind him; they were setting the mines off with dynamite cap and fuse. Before he had taken 10 steps, the combined firepower of three machine guns and a BAR concentrated on him and he was thrown brutally backward, tumbling into the trees, where he exploded with another earth-trembling blast.

There was a pause. Willie spat with a flat, liquid sound that was curiously loud in the bright, midday silence. The muted jabber of Japanese could be heard from the trees—a series of inhuman sounds, urgent, commanding—and another Jap, stumbling as if he had been violently shoved in the back, emerged, only to be cut down before he had taken more than a few steps. Not waiting for a command from Johnson, we raked the trees where the Japs had appeared and, as our tracers darted among the leaves, the explosion of the mine came, followed immediately by the screech of a man suffering unbearable pain. Taking a hoarse breath, loud enough for me to hear plainly, the wounded Jap screamed again, but his vocal cords relaxed in midst of the scream and he died with a weird, horselike neigh.

Our ears ringing, we waited.

It took a long time, 10 minutes or more, before the dust settled completely. And it was some time after that before Johnson said, "Well, I guess that's all of that." He coughed the dust from his throat. "Christ! A *banzai* right in broad daylight! How stupid can they get?" He cleared his throat, which dimly reminded me of the way Colonel Cozzens did when he was embarrassed.

I heard no more. My hearing was gone and the bright sunlight began to fade to a mottled gray. Then I was unconscious.

The next thing I heard was Willie's voice: "Help me a minute here, Joe." It was some time before I realized that he was talking about me. "Put'im back in his hole or he'll walk right out again."

I roused myself to discover that, somehow, I was out of my foxhole and was close to the trees at the edge of the bald knob. Willie swept me into his arms as if I were a child. My head snapped back and my helmet fell to the ground.

"Get his tin hat," Willie said.

"How in the hell did I get—" But the question wasn't worth the effort. I relaxed and let myself be carried back up the hill.

Willie jumped into my foxhole and cradled me in his arms. "Now listen, Sam," he said, his voice coming from close to my ear. "You *got* to hold on, hear? You got to hold on! We'll be pulled out of here tomorrow morning. *No*body's crazy enough to have us stay up here past tomorrow. No! No! Don't start that trembling, Sam! *You got to hold on!"*

Turning my heavy head aside, I vomited violently into the bottom of my foxhole.

"That's all right, Sam," Willie said gently. "That'll make you feel better."

9

My head ached dully and my hands felt bloated and smooth. I arose and leaned against the rim of my foxhole. The sun was achingly bright.

"Think you're going to be all right for a while, Sam?" It was Johnson.

"That was—" I tried again: "That was rough."

"He'll make it," Willie said. "Sam's a tough old son."

"Try to make it till tomorrow morn—," Johnson began.

"Parade George, this is Parade George Charlie. Tom Thumb speaking. Put Little Joe on. Over." Tom Thumb was the giant officer who had commanded the outpost before we had relieved it.

"Little Joe. Over."

"Tom Thumb. I am commanding this company till another officer is officially named. Over." The volume of the radio didn't seem to be as strong as it usually was.

We exchanged startled glances.

"Little Joe. Roger by me. But what happened to Waco? Over."

"This is Tom Thumb. Look, Joe—I mean, Little Joe, I don't know whether I ought to tell you this on the radio or not, but Waco took off this morning and told me he wasn't coming back. Over." Now I was certain that the volume of the radio was weaker.

"Best news," Willie muttered, "I've heard since this war started."

"Shut up!" Johnson said irritably. Into the radio: "Little Joe. You haven't told me much, Tom Thumb. Can't you give me something else? Over."

"Tom Thumb. Well—last night we had a perimeter attack and Waco was acting up in a way I'd never seen before, even if he has been acting funny lately. He charged out of the perimeter and killed a Jap that was throwing grenades from that clump of bamboo." Tom Thumb's voice was growing perceptibly fainter. *"This morning—after we got*

the big news—Waco got in the jeep and told me that he couldn't see any need of playing the goat to Indian Chief anymore. Then he drove off. Over." During the last few words of the message Tom Thumb's voice became so faint that we had to bend low over the radio to hear him. The battery was giving up.

"What big news?" Johnson shouted into the microphone. "What big news? Over."

"Tom Thumb. Well—I shouldn't say on the radio, but well, anyhow—did you ever hear of a town in Japan called Hiroshima? Over."

Johnson, straining to hear, straightened and cried, "Willie, get another battery!" He pushed the butterfly switch. "Yes! Yes! I've heard of Hiroshima! What about it? Over."

The radio was dead.

"Damn it, Willie! Hurry with that battery!"

But Willie strode leisurely back from the supply hole. "Both them batteries, Joe, both of'em're tore all to hell and gone."

Johnson raced madly to the supply hole and wrested the batteries out of their cartons. Willie was right; both batteries had been ripped and torn by grenade fragments. But Johnson, without pause, ran back to the radio with the ruptured batteries and frantically removed the base of the radio. But the batteries, when he connected first one then the other, were ruined.

Johnson jumped to his feet and kicked the radio as hard as he could. "Damn it all to hell!" he shouted. "We'll sit up here and rust while something big breaks loose down there and we won't know a damn thing about it. I *told* Grimes he ought to string wire up here! But hell no! Not Grimes. Too much—" He stopped. "Well, I'll be damn," he said thoughtfully. "Grimes took out on us."

"Ain't nobody going be mournful about that," Willie said.

Johnson pursed his lips and shrugged. He released his lips with a smack. "No," he said, "I guess not." He shrugged again. "That ought to prove something the army might learn some of these days: You can make a man act like a maniac just so long and no longer."

"Maniac," Willie said. "That's Grimes."

Terry said nothing. He didn't appear to be interested in the radio message at all.

"Lord!" Johnson said and slapped his thigh. "I wish to hell I knew what that big news about Hiroshima is!" He shrugged again. "Well, no need worrying about that. Let's get on with the grave-digging."

Terry said, "Sam, when I raised that poncho and saw Savage looking at me like that, I felt like I was going to jump right off that bluff! I've seen enough dead men to build a dam across that river, but Savage got me. Dead Japs don't bother me, but—Savage was looking right at me! Just thinking about it makes me want to run like hell. How about you?"

"I guess," I said, swallowing to prevent vomiting, "I'm getting like you: I'd like to see every Jap in the world dead."

"But not us!"

"No, not us," I said. "Especially not us."

His eyes, which had recently been so bright and quick, searched my face slowly. "I guess," Terry said, "that's not really the way I felt till I seen Savage looking at me like he did."

The remainder of the afternoon passed quickly enough. Time was hurried by fear, which, although it remained unspoken, mounted in intensity as night drew nearer. I was sick, both in my stomach and head, and tried to take my mind away from this morning by working hard on the booby traps. While Willie stood silent guard over me, I arranged the grenades in the trees below our knob. I placed eight of the short-fused grenades so that a Jap, creeping toward us, would step on the wire which was tied to the pins. I chose spots as much as 20 yards into the trees so we would have adequate warning if the grenades weren't as effective as I hoped they would be. The remaining 12 grenades I taped to the trees, at head height, with adhesive from the mortar-shell cases. To the pin of each of these grenades I tied a piece of the telephone wire, the ends of which terminated in my foxhole. If, after dark, I heard a noise that sounded as if a Jap had managed to get past the booby traps, I could pull one of the wires and catch the Japs unexpectedly.

After having completed the traps, I returned to my foxhole and, as the others were doing, dug a shelf at the front edge. Upon this I placed grenades, the contents of a full case; I also put four canisters of machine-gun ammunition and several M-1 clips there too. Each of us shaved a week's growth of whiskers from our faces, but, because my hands were so tremulous and because I had no mirror, I cut myself several times. My cheeks, when I finished shaving, were amazingly smooth and oily and, as Johnson had suggested, I did feel somewhat better. I took a short nap while Willie, creeping carefully from one foxhole to another, prepared our supper.

As the sun touched the horizon, we removed our ponchos that had been serving as tents over our foxholes and folded them neatly in the supply hole. Each of us took his place in his foxhole and, when the sun was gone, waited.

"Jenny . . ." I whispered desperately, "if I can get through tonight, they'll come after us tomorrow. They'll come tomorrow, certainly they will." I wanted, more than anything in my life, to write her a letter.

By now the night was black.

10

THE DARKNESS WAS no more than 30 minutes old when Terry was killed.

We were warned that the Japs were near when two of my booby traps exploded, a nerve-ripping sound that was both times followed by gurgling groans. Johnson held back on the flares, letting the traps do as much damage as they could. I held the wires in my hands and waited. My breath was loud and unsteady, pulsed by my trembling chest.

There came a rapid sequence of clunking sounds as the Japs reached the edge of the trees and armed their grenades by smashing them against their helmets. I jerked two of the wires and, before I could duck, was answered by twin explosions whose flashes briefly silhouetted five Japs against the trees.

Four of them wilted, their grenades still in their hands, but one of them was not wounded, for during that brief flash, I saw him throw. There was a sound of the grenade hitting flesh and Terry uttered a half-grunt, half-sigh, then the Jap grenades began to explode. The one in the hole burst and tossed Terry neatly out of the hole.

"Grenades!" Johnson called softly. "Pull pin—one—two—three—*throw!"*

I heard the grenades hit and roll in the brush and then I heard a jabbered command and the sounds of the Japs scurrying frantically, either to find them and throw them back or to escape their fragments. The three grenades exploded deep in the trees and silhouetted three Japs, each bent in poses of frantic, fumbling search. Their screams were long and so loud that I heard a distinct echo. Then the night was quiet again.

My breath was loud, tremulous, and for one insane moment I thought of jumping over the cliff. Death seemed the logical means of escaping death. It took no more than Johnson's voice to stop me.

"Who got it?" he said.

"Terry," Willie said.

"Sam still with us?"

"Yes," I said. "Yes."

"How many of those short-fused grenades you still have out there?"

"Ten," I said.

"All right. They'll rest and think it over for a while. I'll watch. You two try to sleep."

I did try. I folded myself and huddled at the bottom of my foxhole as if I were trying to find shelter against an arctic wind, but the trembling, which lessened somewhat but never entirely left me, kept me awake. The hallucinations were the closest I got to sleep.

And they were intensely vivid. Carved on a log above the fireplace in Poppa's fishing cabin were the words "Sam loves Jenny," and they were encircled by a heart. There were once two young people who made love in a boat and tittered foolishly because they were nearly seen by two passing fishermen. There was a girl named Jenny and a boy named Sam. Sam's father was called Poppa and Jenny called him Poppa Felix. And there was the concerned face of a civilian named Cozzens who had by the incongruous circumstances of war commanded a regiment. And there were faces: the long-nosed, swarthy smile of a Yankee, Meleski. The defeated eyes of Webster. And the surprised death mask of Raker, father of four children. Those people, equally innocent, had arranged the termination of my own innocence. And there were explosions, crushed bodies, flames, half-severed bodies, glasses, eyes that seemed actually slanted, and long teeth. There was the pop of grenade fuses and there was the morbid whistle of steel fragments. There were flares and hoarse shouts and rifles. Too many rifles. Too much youth siphoned by fear. Too many patrols. Too many foolish little men ready to die because their emperor must live a thousand years.

"Hey, you guys up there!" It was an American voice, American accented, and it came from the trees. For a wild moment, I thought help had come. "Hey, up there!"

Willie whispered, "Joe—Joe, what's that?"

"Be quiet," Johnson said sharply.

"Hey, you guys up there! Hold your fire! We're reenforcements."

At night? No, not at night.

"Lillie Lollipop," Johnson shouted, and waited for the countersign.

"Sorry, boys," the voice said. "Captain Grimes didn't give us the countersign."

"When did you talk to Grimes?" Johnson asked.

"Hell, Joe, not more than an hour ago."

"All right, come on out so we can see you."

"Oh, no, don't fire that flare. There are Japanese soldiers all over this hill. You'll just have to let us walk up in the dark."

"All right, come on in."

I heard the slightest noise when Johnson traversed his 51. "Wait for me to fire," he whispered.

There was a shuffle of feet on the hard earth and I saw a mass detach itself from the trees and move up the slope of the knob. They were coming up at squad front. Americans always move in single file, like Indians.

Both of my hands were jerking in uncontrollable spasms.

"We had a hell of a time finding you guys," the voice spoke from the mass of men. "How many men you got, Joe?"

"Seven," Joe said blandly. "How about you?"

"A full squad, nine men." American squads have 12.

"Damn glad to see you," Johnson said.

I curled my finger around the machine-gun trigger.

"Damn, Joe, it's dark up here. How did you ever—"

I didn't intend to pull the trigger, but my hands were jerking so that I touched off a burst without being able to help it. Immediately there was the sound of Johnson dropping a flare into the tube and then all three of us were firing.

The Japs returned our fire. There were three Nambus and several rifles. But we were too much for them. When the flare finally burst, there were already several Japs sprawled and only three standing. One of them, tracers plunging into his belly, continued to stand and fire his Nambu until Willie and I dropped him. The Nambus fired another burst and at the same time the heavy blast of Johnson's 51 stopped. Willie and I continued to fire into the fallen Japs to make certain none of them was playing possum. We stopped when the flare fell into the trees.

"Willie?" Johnson said. There was a catch in his voice, as if he were about to cry.

"Yeah, Joe?"

"Willie, I've been hit." He was completely surprised.

"I'll help you, Joe, so you—"

"Stay in your hole!"

Willie moved in the dark. "Take it easy, Joe."

"Willie," Johnson said sternly, "get back to your hole. That's an order, Willie. That's an order. First one I ever gave you. So you'd better do as I—" Johnson stopped. Then: "Oh-oh! Willie, you're big brother from now on."

"Cut it out, Joe." There was the sound of Willie easing into Joe's foxhole. After a moment, Willie whispered, "Sam?"

"Yes?"

"Joe's dead."

11

It was some time between midnight and dawn when the next attack came. After Willie had announced Joe's death, there had been a muted scraping and rustling as Willie discarded the 51. Its ammo supply was too close to exhaustion.

A Jap hit one of the trip wires on my booby traps and the flash revealed several others standing among the trees. Willie gave them a burst on his machine gun and I sluggishly jerked four of the wires to fire the head-height grenades. The surviving Japs suddenly charged us desperately, but Willie had a flare in the air before they cleared the trees and we cut them down before they fired a shot. We tried to hose them down, but they had taken cover behind the bodies of the men we had already killed.

"Think you'll make it, Sam?" Willie said.

"I don't know."

"You ain't sick, are you?"

"No."

"I can hear you shaking."

"Can you?"

"Yeah."

"I can hear you breathing."

Pausing between each exchange, listening, we talked for more than an hour.

"Are you a rich man, Sam?"

"No."

"You're pretty well off though, ain't you?"

"Comfortable, that's all."

"You ever been in Walnut Creek?"

"Yes."

"What'd you think about it?"

"Not much."

"It ain't much of a town."

"I guess not."

"I ain't going back there after the war."

"Where're you going?"

"Gray's Landing."

"That's good."

"Can I get a job working for you?"

"Yes."

"What kind of job?"

"Any kind I have that you want."

"Any good-looking girls in Gray's Landing?"

"Lots of them."

"Think they'd go for me?"

"Sure they would."

"Even if I am a country jake?"

"They'd be foolish if they didn't."

"I wouldn't want no high-class woman."
"You can find the kind you want."
"I ain't got much education."
"You don't need it."
"Just fourth grade."
"That's enough."
"What kind of jobs you got for me?"
"Cotton farming."
"Yeah?"
"Gin mechanic."
"Yeah?"
"Truck driver."
"I'm a good truck driver."
"All right, you're hired."
"How much you pay?"
"I don't know. How much do you want?"
"Hundred dollars a month?"
"More than that."
"That so?"
"Poppa says salaries are higher now."
"How high?"
"Probably a hundred and fifty for drivers."
"That's a lot of money."
"Could you live on that?"
"I've lived on three hundred a year."
"That's impossible."
"Yeah, but it's the truth."
"How come?"
"The Judge starves his croppers."
"How'd you make out on three hundred?"
"Growed the vittles and Maw canned'em."
"That's no way to live."
"Lots of people do it that way."
"My croppers might have, but they'll never again."
"Good. What time is it?"
"Three forty-five."
"Think you're going to make it now?"
"Yes," I said. "I think so now."

For many minutes I stood in my foxhole and listened to the sounds of the night. There was the buzz of insects and the distant bark of a dog and a breeze murmured among the trees, but my ears noted and dismissed those. I listened for the swish of cloth against brush, the shuffle of split-toed boots, the insistent tap of Japs signaling by thumping their rifle butts. And I heard the abiding tremble of my own breath.

"Willie?"
"Yeah?"
"I wasn't kidding about giving you a job, hear?"
"Okay, Sam. Thanks. I'll take it."
"I'd be proud to have you working for me."
"Good."

Willie said nothing more for a long time. I could hear his breath, rapid but steady, and occasionally there was the smallest noise as he turned his head to listen.

"Getting close to daylight," Willie whispered. "See how them clouds is lighting up?"

"Do you think they'll attack after sunup?"

"Maybe. But at least we'll be able to see 'em coming. Besides, we'll be getting relief before long. After the radio went out"—he stopped to listen—"they'll get help up here fast as they can."

"I hope so."
"Think you're going to make it now, Sam?"
"I know I will."

When the sun first showed over the horizon, it lighted the hilltops with heavy, gaudy splashes of color, leaving the valleys as dark pools of cool purple. Willie's long solemn face, still clean-shaven, was wet with sweat and the yellow sunlight made it glow. He turned to look at the valley across the river behind us.

"Daylight looks pretty good, don't she?"
"It never looked better," I said.
Clunk!

One of the Japs had played possum all night and now he had thrown a grenade. It came in a shallow arc and hit Willie squarely in the chest. He reared back to pick it up, changed his mind, and started to scramble from his foxhole. His body was clear of the foxhole when the grenade exploded, but his left leg, still in the hole, caught the full force of the explosion.

I killed the Jap with a long burst. I rushed to Willie's foxhole and knelt beside him. The fatigue trousers had been ripped almost completely away from his leg and the knee was severely wounded. The kneecap, strangely free of blood, dangled free, held only by a scrap of white tendon. I rolled him over and, jerking his first-aid pack from his belt, started to work on him.

"Ohhhhhhhhh," he said softly.
"Hurt?"
"No, it don't hurt, but it scares hell outta me."

The blood began coming then. Willie recoiled with fright and tried to get his fingers into the wound. I slapped him sharply across his cheek.

"Leave it alone," I said. "Look at it. It's seeping, not running."

Willie looked at me and grinned. "Blood scares hell out of me."

I removed Willie's belt and applied it as a tourniquet, and the seeping stopped. I pulled the bandage tight. Not knowing how much to use, I emptied the remaining sulfa crystals from Johnson's first-aid kit into the wound.

Willie sat up, his leg poked straight out in front of him. "Put one of them machine guns right here." He indicated the space between his legs.

I wrestled the machine gun to him. My calmness amazed me. I almost felt as good as I had during my first days of combat. When I held my hands up for Willie, he grinned and winked.

"Not airy a shake, huh?" He spat.
"Think you'll be able to make it, Willie?" I said.

"I feel a little funny," he admitted, "kinda cold. But I ain't hurting. Put three or four of them ten-in-one boxes behind my back so's I'n lean back and rest a little." He was quite pale and he was sweating heavily.

Willie looked at Johnson's corpse, which was still in its foxhole.

"Joe was a damn good officer," Willie said, "you know it?"

"Best I ever saw," I said. And he was. Better than Lieutenant Baxter, better than Ray Mosby. Maybe even better than Colonel Cozzens. A better officer, because the Colonel was never anything less than a civilian, while Joe had, in spite of himself, become somewhat of the professional; he was certainly the kind of man the Colonel liked.

"When Grimes busted me from top kick," Willie said, "Joe argued with'im for a week. Even threatened to resign his commission. Would've too, if I hadn't told'im to forget it." Willie spat.

The sound of some Japs' voices startled us and I hustled over to my machine gun. But there was no charge. A loud voice rattled off something in Japanese—it sounded like a command—and there was the rustlings of several other Japs among the trees. I heard them walking down the rolling rocks of the trail. I saw no Japs at all.

"Pulling'em back," Willie announced. "Thinking up some new tricks."

We waited. I opened a 10-in-one and handed Willie a breakfast of canned eggs and bacon. He tasted it, but he couldn't eat. He drank four canteens of water. The sun was soon hot and I rigged a shelter over him, but the ponchos were so riddled with fragments that they offered little shade. I placed the two canteens from Johnson's cartridge belt between the tripod legs of Willie's machine gun and he drank water while I finished my breakfast. Willie's breath was getting shorter.

He was in shock, but it wasn't severe. It takes a lot, I thought, to hurt a tough old sharecropper like Willie. A

hell of a lot more than it takes for me and my kind.

"Them boys ought to be here to relieve us pretty soon," he said.

"They'll get here soon as they can."

"My leg's beginning to hurt."

I found a syrette in Johnson's first-aid kit and gave Willie a shot of morphine, hoping that three-fourths of the tuhe wasn't too much.

"I wish we could bury Joe," he said.

"The relief will take care of that."

"Yeah," he said slowly and glanced at the wrist watch on the mortar sight, "I guess they will." He grinned weakly.

The sun got hotter. It burned like a fireplace at my back.

"My leg's ruined, ain't it?"

"It'll he stiff, Willie, but I've heard of stiff-legged truck drivers before."

He looked at the watch again. "They'll send me home," he said, "when they get me down off this hill."

"That's right."

"Don't that watch say five till ten?"

"Yes."

The hig, dirty hands wiped sweat from his face. He sighed loudly. "They ain't coming."

"They'll he here after a while." But I knew I was lying. Oddly enough, the realization didn't frighten me as much as I thought it would. I was too preoccupied with my worries about Willie.

"No," he said, "they ain't coming or they'd be here hy now." He took a deep hreath. "Little short of hreath."

"You're in mild shock," I said. "It does you that way."

"I guess so. Look, Sam. You're going to have to run for it."

"No, I'm staying here, Willie," I said firmly. "I have no intention of leaving you up here alone."

"You'll have to run for—"

"Willie, I'm not going—"

"Listen to *me!* I'm in charge here. Them Japs'll he trying something again after while. If you stay here they'll more'n likely get both of us. If you run for it, they's a chance you might make it and hring somebody up to get me. You got to try it."

"No, I'm staying here," I said. "I can't lose my best truck driver."

"Sam, you're just juiced up. You'll break down again after while, first time the Japs attack, and I'll he the same as by myself."

He was right of course. The coming of daylight didn't warrant such a rise in optimism.

"All right," I said, "if they're not here in fifteen minutes, I'll give it a try."

12

THE CORPSES OF JOHNSON and Terry rested where they had fallen; I couldn't hury them. I covered them with their ponchos.

I said, "Terry's the only man to like combat I've ever seen."

"Yeah," Willie agreed, "hut he pooped out hefore he got killed."

I thought of Johnson. Some time in the future—I hoped it wouldn't he too soon—his beautiful wife would marry again because a woman of her heauty would have men after her. And this corpse who had once heen a man would be a shadowy figure of her past. Someday there would be a time when weeks would pass without her thinking of him at all. And finally, she would forget what kind of man he had been, what he looked like. And, thinking of the moment when she would soon be in grief, it seemed cruel that six of us had known him hetter than she ever had.

"Sam, hold your hands out so's I'n see'em," Willie said.

"Don't worry about me, Willie. I'm all right."

"All right, my eye. Hold out them hands!"

I extended them toward him.

"What'd I tell you!" he said.

I shook my head stuhhornly.

"Look down there in that paddy again, Sam."

Advancing, bandy-legged, across the yellow mat of rice straw, were at least a hundred Japs. At the head of the column, various hrass devices agleam in the hright sun, marched another high-ranking officer. I quickly put my hands in my pockets where they were safely out of Willie's sight.

"We ain't got a chance with that many, Sam. You hetter be getting ready." He gave me no chance to argue. He was giving the kind of order Johnson and—earlier in the war—Ray Mosby gave: there was no room left for a question.

"Take the BAR," he said. "Put the ammo vest on. *Hurry!*"

I did as I was told. "Willie, I can't go running off—"

"Damn you, Sam! *Hurry!*"

From the trees there was silence. The Jap column was still moving across the paddy.

"I'll see you in Gray's Landing," Willie said. Urgently: "Now—*run!*"

I turned and trotted down the trail, my canteens houncing at my hutt. It was a mistake. A damn *foolish* mistake. Trotting was the wrong thing to do—wrong altogether. I couldn't slow to a walk; it required all my strength to keep from breaking into a run, for the hill was so steep and the trail, washed by a thousand tropical rains, was littered with stones that rolled under my feet.

Oh my God, I thought, I should have rememhered this.

I held the BAR at low port and, slipping, often staggering, tried to place my feet where there was a chance that I might have smoother footing.

I was running so fast that the wind whistled in my ears. My cap was hlown from my head and rolled down my back. It was a certainty that I would fall soon; my legs couldn't possibly pound fast enough to keep pace with my hurtling body.

But, when I passed around a shallow bend, my legs served me well, for I saw a large group of Japs seated in a rough circle on the trail. They appeared to be chatting pleasantly ahout something. I even gained more speed and my legs, instead of trying to hold me back, actually strained for more speed.

The Japs gaped in awe. I pressed the trigger of the BAR. A hurst of fire spewed at them and, a wild cry trailing behind me, I hurtled through their group and was out of sight around another bend in the trail.

I remembered the creek that drained into the river at the hottom of the hill and I worried hriefly ahout how I was going to slacken my speed enough to wade it, hut then I thought of that no more, for it appeared, slamming into view as if it had heen dropped across the trail by some cruel genie. And I jumped. I drew my legs up under me and sailed. It was only here that time slowed, for I seemed to have sailed forever and forever.

When I landed on the distant hank, my right foot folded under me and rolled with my weight. There was a tug and a crunch in my ankle and the landscape of gullies and trees slanted crazily and I was rolling. A rock smashed into my mouth and a smear of liquid splashed into my eyes. Whirling so fast that I could make my eyes register no more than a sliding hlur, I tumhled down an embankment and rolled halfway up another one before my momentum died and I fell back into the gully.

I jumped to my feet, still grasping the BAR at port-arms, and burst from the trees like a deer. I sped across the rice paddy and into the ruins of Angat. Although my right foot felt slightly heavier than the other one, I seemed not to touch

the crumbled paving at all. My combat boots were light as ballet slippers and I reached out and brought back giant, seven-league strides. Each time my weight was on my right foot, a chilling electric shock raced up my spine, but I didn't decrease my speed.

I didn't stop running until I reached the bend in the road that turns toward the George perimeter. Nor would I have stopped then if my right foot had not become leadenly heavy. I slowed to a hurried walk. My breath was so loud that I couldn't hear the heavy tread of my boots. And each time my heart gave an ear-filling beat, my head swelled and ached sharply. Each breath seared my lungs.

My right boot was laced too tight. That was a damn foolish thing to do, my mind registered. Any seasoned infantryman could tell you the most foolish of all mistakes is a tightly laced boot. With a rip of the laces of my boot, my ankle burst free and flowed with sappy fat until it reached the limits of the boot's tongue. The huge egg of fat around my ankle was warm and I could feel it jiggle with each step.

"Got to stop," I gasped aloud. "Ankle hurt."

But there was no need for me to stop. There was no pain. Indeed, the only reason I was aware there was anything more serious than a sudden blob of fat was the peculiar little squeegy sound inside the ankle when I put my weight on it. It sent no protesting pain to my head. Why then, Sam, you old hard infantryman, you old professional soldier, should you stop?

"I'm not going to," I answered. "Willie can't last all day up there."

A very funny sound the ankle makes. I laughed aloud. Very funny.

I walked almost a half mile before my breath stopped choking me. Maybe I'm safe now. Maybe. Yes, maybe.

"Safe like hell," I muttered. "Gray's Landing is the only safe place in the world." I stumbled on the bad ankle. "In the whole God damned world."

13

WHEN I ENTERED the George perimeter, I was not certain that I had found the right place. For, instead of the sullen perimeter I had known in the days of Captain Grimes, there was a great hustle of men, trucks and jeeps. But they weren't George Company men. Some of the faces looked vaguely familiar, but. . . . Thinking only of finding Tom Thumb so he could send a patrol after Willie, I made my way through the perimeter. I had no idea of his whereabouts, but I was going to find him. Of that I was certain.

"Hey!" somebody called. "Hey, *Sam!*"

Must be somebody else around here named Sam, I thought.

A hand gripped my shoulder and tried to turn me about. I jerked away fiercely. It was insanely maddening for anybody to be so stupid as to interfere with my plans.

"Let go," I said. "Willie's still up there." I plowed on, my fattened ankle jiggling at each step.

"*Oh*-oh," the voice said.

"Get him," another voice said quietly. "That ankle—he'll mess it up good!"

The *sotto voce* intrigue, so merciless in its disregard of Willie's safety, threw me into a violent rage. I whirled and trained the BAR on the two men who stood behind me. One of them was bearded and dirty; he carried an M-1 at sling. The other one, a captain, was clean-shaven and rather pale.

"Just try it!" I said. "Just move and see what happens! Just move one time!"

"Aw, take it easy, Sam," the bearded one said. "We ain't going to hurt you. All we want to do"—as he talked he moved slowly to my left—"is give you a little help with that ankle. You're hurt, Sam. You're hurt bad. No need of walking on it till we have a chance to see what's—"

The clean-shaven captain grabbed the BAR by the barrel and pushed it up. I jerked frantically at the trigger and emptied the clip. The bullets sprayed the tops of the house that had been Grimes' headquarters.

"Get'im!" the bearded one said.

And both of them jumped me. In that instant I became a fatalist; if Willie must die because of the incredible stupidity of such people as these, then there was nothing I could do about it. I relaxed.

"What the hell's going on here?" a stern voice demanded gruffly.

I lay, relaxed, and stared at the blue, peaceful sky, aware only of the weight of the two men sitting on me.

"It's Sam Gifford, General," the pale captain said. "He wandered in here a minute ago, didn't stop, just kept going. He's out of his head—"

"No I'm not," I mumbled.

"Look at that ankle," the pale captain finished.

"Doctor Wingate!" the general's voice called loudly. "Come up here and see what's wrong with this man." I heard him whistle sharply. "That ankle's broken, I'd say."

The bearded face appeared over me. "Take it easy now, Sam," he whispered and grinned. I could smell his hot breath plainly; he had been eating K-ration. "You'll be all right in just a minute." He waiting for a reaction and then, seeing none, he said, "Don't you know me, Sam? I'm Kenny. Kenny Carr. Don't you know me?"

I blinked slowly, almost fell asleep, but I still had Willie to think about. . . . I spat into the bearded face.

He jerked back, grunted with surprise, and wiped his face with the sleeve of his fatigue jacket. "Jesus!" he said. "He's plumb off his marbles, General!"

"Yes," the general said. *"Doctor Wingate!"*

The pale captain bent over me. "I'm Ray, Sam. Ray Mosby. You'll be taken care of in just a minute."

I turned my head away. The sky was incredibly high. And blue. At the top of my field of vision, immediately behind the general's starred helmet, floated a puff of white cloud, as white as a burst of cotton.

I'm a cotton man. Back in a little town called Gray's Landing I am a very important individual. I am the heir to one of the town's fortunes; I own a lot of land, I own a gin, a house and an expensive car. I married the prettiest girl in town and she is still in love with me. She will be proud to meet my new friend, the only friend I ever had, and she will treat him like a brother. Willie, boy, you're my brother.

"General?" I said.

"What is it, Son?" For a moment I thought he was Colonel Cozzens masquerading as somebody else.

"Are you commanding this outfit?"

"Yes, what can I do for you?"

"There's a hill up there," I said, "and we call it Parade George. Willie Crawford's up there and he's badly wounded. Busted kneecap. I'd sure be much obliged if you would send somebody up there after him."

"Captain Mosby," the general said, "take Recon and the antitank platoon up to that hill. Find out from Intelligence where it is. Go as far as you can in trucks. If you meet resistance, start shooting. I want that boy off that hill and I want him off fast, so on the double. You have twenty minutes, Captain."

"Yessir. Stay with Sam, Kenny."

There was a shuffle of feet and the captain named Mosby left. The general bent over me.

"What did you say your name was, Son?"

"Sam Gifford," said the bearded one named Carr.

"He'll answer me, Sergeant," the general said. "Tell me your name, Son."

My ankle was grasped and somebody said, "*Cut* the boot off!"

"Samuel Francis Gifford," I said.

My sleeve was jerked up and there was a sharp pain in my shoulder.

"Doctor Wingate gave you a shot, Sam," the general said. "Do you know Doc Wingate?"

"There used to be a Doc Wingate in my home town."

"Is this the man?" A new face appeared behind the general.

"Nosir," I said. "I don't know that man."

"Are you married, Sam?"

"Yessir."

"What's your wife's name?"

"Jenny."

"What was her maiden name?"

"Jenny Cozzens."

The general looked inquiringly toward the bearded sergeant. "Cozzens?"

"Yessir," the bearded one said. "Sam's Colonel Cozzens' son-in-law, General."

The general looked down at me. "Do you remember Colonel Cozzens, Sam?"

"Yessir, I do."

"I hear he was a good soldier."

"The best, General. But he should've been commanding a regiment of Confederate infantry."

"Oh? Tell me about it."

It wasn't worth the trouble. I smiled benignly at the little cloud above the general's head.

"Keep talking, General," somebody said. "Tell him about the war."

I gave the general a thorough examination. He was a strong-faced man, about 45. There were three gray hairs in his right eyebrow and there were three parallel scars on his right cheek. Under his eyes were some wrinkles that looked like little relief maps of a gullied area. His nose had been broken and flattened. There was a fungus scab in the left corner of his mouth. His lips were thin. There was a huge cleft in his chin. He needed a shave.

"Sam," he said, "did you know the war's about over?"

I looked him square in the eye. "Don't lie to me, General."

He held up his right hand. "I'm not lying, Sam. That's what I'm doing up here. We're trying to contact a Jap general hiding up there in the hills and tell him to stop figbting. Hear the radios?"

I did hear the chirp of several radios sending on C-W. "Yessir."

"Well, they're trying to tell the Jap general that he's not to send any more attack parties out. If we can get him to agree, the war's over."

"First time I ever heard of a Jap giving up," I said.

"They will, though."

"I can't see why."

"We dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima a day or so ago."

"What's an atom bomb?"

"I don't know, but it must be a big one."

"And you're not lying?"

He laughed. "You don't think a general would be up this close to the line if the war wasn't almost over, do you?"

"Nosir," I said seriously.

He chuckled before he got serious again. "Did they attack you last night?"

"Yessir. When we first went up there on the hill, there were seven of us. All but Willie and me got killed. Did you send somebody after Willie?"

"I sure did, Sam."

"Where's Colonel Miles?"

"He—"

"They're answering, General!" somebody shouted.

The general patted my shoulder. "Take it easy, Son. I've got a little work to do." He hurried away.

Carr bent over me. "Ankle hurting, Sam?"

I shook my head. "Where's Colonel Miles?"

"He got transferred back to the States, Sam. Ain't that fine?"

"No," I said, "no. I was planning on killing him."

My leg was lifted and I felt a tap on the tendon below my kneecap. I didn't feel a reflex. "It's going to be a bad ankle long's he lives, but he'll be able to walk on it."

"That was Doc Wingate, wasn't it?" I said.

"Sure was," Carr said.

"You really are Kenny Carr, aren't you?"

He grinned down at me. "I sure am, Sam."

"What really happened to Captain Grimes, Kenny?"

"He tried to get at Colonel Miles with a tommy-gun," Kenny said. "A guard shot'im."

Doc Wingate said, "Get out of the way, Kenny. Help us put him on the stretcher."

I was rolled completely over and when I saw the sky again I was resting on the taut canvas of a stretcher. With a slight jolt I was lifted and moved along. I tried to sit up.

"Stay on your back, Sam," Doc Wingate said.

"Where're you taking me?" I said.

"Hospital." The open back of a field ambulance appeared. "You need a little rest."

"I'm not leaving here," I said firmly, "till they bring Willie in."

Doc appeared over me. "Now, Sam—"

"I mean it, Doc."

"All right," Doc said and gestured to the medics. "Put the stubborn son-of-a-gun down."

I was lowered to the earth.

"Is the war really over, Doc?" I said.

"Looks like it," Doc said. "Isn't that right, Kenny?"

"All but the shouting," Kenny said. "The general'd been told all you guys'd been pulled off those hills late yesterday afternoon. I wondered where you were. What made you not come in?"

"Our radio was out."

"Willie's going to drive a truck for me when we get home," I said. "He's going to live with Jenny and me, too."

I could feel my ankle now. It was warm and tight and cold and flabby. Doc Wingate wiped my forehead with a fold of gauze.

"Jenny'll be glad to see you," Doc said.

"When will I get home?"

"Three weeks. A month, maybe. Not long."

The general appeared over me. "If I had known you men were still up there, I'd've sent a patrol out as soon—"

" 'Scuse me, General," Doc said. "Put him right here by Sam, boys." There was a rustle of uniforms and shuffling of boots. Doc said, "Well, Sam, here's your Willie."

Willie, his face pale, his eyes closed, lay beside me. There were tobacco stains at the corners of his mouth.

"Is he dead?" I asked anxiously.

"No," Willie said. He didn't open his eyes.

"He'll be all right," Doc said. "Fix those transfusion bottles up there." He turned to direct the erection of the plasma bottles.

"Willie," I said, "you old son, we made it! We outlasted the war!"

Willie nodded weakly and, weaker still, a grin twitched at his mouth.

"I'll have Jenny lay us out a real banquet, Willie," I said. "We'll get some home-brew from Uncle Ben and really throw a wing-ding." That was a funny remark, a very funny remark. Oh, no doubt about it, I was a great humorist. And I had outlasted the war. I began to chuckle. But it got away from me; I couldn't stop. I laughed until my throat hurt. It was all very droll. I had outlasted the war.

"Give Sam another shot," Doc said. "Not too much now, just enough to put him to sleep."

I continued to laugh hilariously until the morphine put me to sleep. —By Francis Irby Gwaltney



Continued from page 4.

tion. It was, of course, valuable to me financially, but it also relieved my state of mind a great deal.

This will buy you a fifth or cigars or whatever you choose to do with it.

Again, thanks very much. You are doing a lot of good.

C. V. Fridge, *Baton Rouge, La.*

Says Sid Margolius to Mr. Fridge: "Thanks for your nice letter and your thoughtfulness in telling me how you made out. But I can't accept the money order you sent me. Bluebook *pays me adequately for my work and the chance to help someone who needs a hand is an added bonus."*

Sid's Social Security article in last January's issue got such an enthusiastic response and helped so many people that we talked him into doing a regular monthly column to answer questions about anything related to money. The first column appears in this issue on page 2. —Ed.

New Angle on Honest Abe

I would appreciate it very much indeed if you could give me some information regarding the history of the Lincoln portrait (February cover) and some background information on the painter, Richard Cardiff. (Would like to know also if Mr. Cardiff is a Welshman.)

Glenn A. Williams, *Iowa Falls, Iowa*

Shortly after we bought the Lincoln novel, we ran into illustrator Dick Cardiff on the commuters' special. We asked him to suggest an artist who could do a good Lincoln cover and he said, "I'd like to tackle the job myself." He submitted a rough sketch and we were sold.

Cardiff did the painting after studying scores of photos and portraits of the former president. Since none showed Lincoln looking down, Cardiff had to project the lines of Lincoln's face to that particular angle. Dick does a lot of magazine illustration, has painted many pocket-book covers. He was born in England, and the name "Cardiff" is Irish rather than Welsh.—Ed.

Too Young to Die

Have just finished reading the bitch section of your February issue. *My* only gripe is, "there 'ain't' enough."

As a teacher I enjoy reading your mag between recess and at noon hour even while the kids romp. Sometimes I read it to them. Like your story on "honest Abe." I am sometimes tempted to let the kids go hang during class so I can continue reading. (Don't tell my boss or I'll be inactive.)

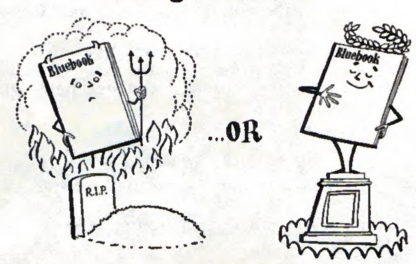


For years I have been driving the man at the store crazy asking for Bluebook (and acting like a baby when I can't get it—wife can't stand me then). You should make them bigger and twice a month.

Don't bury it yet—I'm too young to die.

W. J. C., Jr., *Ipswich, S. D.*

Ring in the Old



I can't see our beloved Bluebook go completely to the dogs without adding my voice to the rest of the old readers in protest against the present policy which is sapping the very life out of this once incomparable magazine.

Forget all that how-to-do-it junk and all that other filler, and get back to the red-blooded, variety adventure, all-fiction classic Bluebook once was. Continue present policies and Bluebook will go down to an ignominious and untimely grave.

Hoping you will see the light in time to save dear *old* Bluebook (not *new*) and put it back on the pedestal it once occupied and so richly deserved.

Clifford Dalbey, *Mora, Minn.*

March movie-contest winner:
Don Barrese
Green Street, New Orleans, La.

...AND YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT 'EM



"Last one to get a hole-in-one buys the cocktails!"

Bluebook



Exciting New Articles, Stories, and Features in July

In "Why We Won't Be Bombed," ace Washington reporter Andrew Tully reveals why U.S. military and scientific experts are confident that we won't have a war anytime soon.

A certain section out West boasts a record number of sober citizens who've told of seeing strange goings-on in the sky. Paul C. Benard has looked into this for us and comes up with a remarkable "Report From the Flying Saucer Country."

Most drivers do things to their cars that are very good for the auto-repair business. Just the same, here we have the operator of a large Eastern garage giving tips designed, frankly, to help you "Keep Your Car Out of My Garage."

Our book-length novel is an exceptionally clever thriller by Henry Kane in which his famous detective, Pete Chambers, solves the very whing-ding of a "perfect" crime.

The rest of the fine BLUEBOOK fiction will include: "Potomac Patrol," another Caleb Pettengill action story by George Fielding Eliot . . . "The Hunting of the Rogue," a top-notch African adventure tale by Robert W. Krepps, author of "Tell It on the Drums" . . . And "Rimini Fourth of July," one of the most unusual Westerns we've ever published.

You'll have all this—and many other stories, articles and features. Seems to us it would be a smart move to ask your newsdealer to

Reserve your July Bluebook NOW!

on sale at your newsstand June 28th

Will Daddy be all right?

Your help can mean the difference between the "Yes" or the "No" that answers this child's frightened question. For the girl's father has Cancer.

Cancer plays no favorites. It strikes young as well as old, rich and poor, strong and weak. It lays its black finger on 1 out of every 4 Americans. But this terrible scourge *can* be conquered.

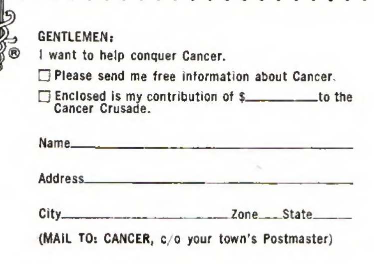
It *will* be conquered. *If you help.*

The American Cancer Society—through a legion of doctors, technicians, scientists, volunteers—wages endless war on our most dreaded disease. And every year some 75,000 men, women and children win their own personal victory in the fight back to health.

But too many are lost. Too many seek care too late. To fight this healing war takes money — money for education, research, drugs, equipment.

Will *you* help conquer Cancer? By a *check* — to help others. By an annual *checkup*—to help yourself. What you give today may mean the difference between "Yes" and "No" for yourself—or someone dear to you—in the days to come.

American Cancer Society



GENTLEMEN:

I want to help conquer Cancer.

☐ Please send me free information about Cancer.

☐ Enclosed is my contribution of $________ to the Cancer Crusade.

Name________________________

Address________________________

City______________ Zone___ State_____

(MAIL TO: CANCER, c/o your town's Postmaster)